

IRISH WRITING

THE MAGAZINE OF
CONTEMPORARY IRISH LITERATURE

Edited by

DAVID MARCUS

and

TERENCE SMITH

Nos. 18-21

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ROBERT BRENNAN

JIM CONNOLLY OF BOSTON

SOME time in the early days of 1921 when the Black and Tans were rampaging through the land and the Irish Republican Government was underground, I left a secret conclave of a few of the leaders and boarded a tram to return to my office. It was one of the old open-top trams and I was sitting on top when, at Baggot Street Bridge, I saw that the tram in front was held up by a mixed party of Auxiliaries and khaki-clad soldiers. All the passengers were being made to dismount to be searched and questioned.

I was in a panic because I had in my pocket a number of decoded messages from our undercover agent in Germany concerning the possibility of landing arms in Ireland from a Zeppelin. If these messages were found on me I might be hanged. There was no use in descending and trying to get away for there were isolated Auxiliaries here and there watching for such an eventuality.

I was at my wits' end when a man pushed in beside me.

"Have you got anything on you?" he asked.

I looked at the man in astonishment. He was a tall, rangy American journalist named Connolly, whom I had seen with Mr. de Valera a few days before. I had met him only for a moment and I was amazed that he should have recognised me.

"I have some papers," I said.

"Give them to me."

"What about you? You'll be searched too."

"I have an American passport."

"They won't respect it," I said.

"They'd better respect it," he said.

I gave him the papers and we both descended and were searched and questioned—at least I was—and we climbed on the tram again. Only when the tram moved off did Connolly give me back my papers. He got off at the next stop.

Some eight years later I was on a walking tour through Cork and Kerry and having tramped the tunnel road over the hill from Glengariff, I put up at a little hotel in Kenmare which was run by two sisters who had lived for some time in Boston. One of them lent me a book which was written by a man she knew in that city. It was a collection of short stories dealing with the sea and I marvelled I had not heard of the writer before. His sea stories were, to my mind, far ahead of those of Melville or Kipling and, in many respects, those of Conrad himself. Later I got hold of more of his books and I realised I was in the presence of a man who was not only a great story teller but who himself was as tough and daring as any of the Gloucester fishermen of whom he wrote.

He depicts the majesty and terror of the sea as few have done. Some of his short stories like *The Trawler*, *Dory Mates*, *Truth of the Cromwell*, *The Blasphemer* and *Between Shipmates*, are classics. They were written by a man who shared the perils of the unassuming heroes of whom he writes.

The writer was James Brendan Connolly and such is the man's amazing reticence that it was only quite lately that I realised he was the man who had saved my life on Baggot Street Bridge.

The story of Connolly's own life transcends that of any of his heroes. It has the material for a dozen dramas. He tells it in *Seaborne*. Get the book—if you can—and read it. I have it on a special shelf beside *Schiffley's Ride*, *Commando*, *Robbery Under Arms* and *The Riddle of the Sands*.

He says with pride that his father and mother were Aran Islanders. They emigrated to Boston. There was a tradition in the family that the Galwayman who had sailed to America with Columbus was an ancestor of theirs. His parents, mindful of the voyage of the first man to discover American shores, had given him the second name of Brendan. He was one of twelve children. His mother, with the fear of the sea born of her experience in the Aran Islands, tried to wean her sons from it but already her husband and her own brother had joined the fishing fleet sailing out of Gloucester. These hardy fisherfolk travelled a thousand miles over stormy seas to bring back the silvery cargo.

James Brendan, despite his mother's warnings, loved the scent of the brine. He was only seven when he persuaded his Uncle Jim O'Donnell to take him on a winter fishing cruise. This Jim O'Donnell was the original of the tough, hard drinking and lovable "Clancy" of many of the stories. Young Jim went with the fleet to the grim fishing grounds on George's Banks, where many a Gloucester trawler had been lost with all hands. At that early age he experienced one of the worst wintry gales of the year but it did not diminish his love of the sea.

He quit a cushy job in an insurance office in Boston to work on a harbour development project in Savannah, Georgia. But life there was too monotonous. His only recreations there were captaining the Savannah football team and going down in a diver's suit to fight alligators with a baseball club. Incidentally, while there he saved a negro boy's life by diving into a shark-infested sea. He hardly mentions the matter himself but Mark Sullivan, the noted American commentator, has told us about it.

Back to Boston went Connolly determined now to get an engineering degree in Harvard. Though he had never been to High School, he passed the entrance examination and was doing fairly well when, before the year was out, he read in a newspaper that the Olympic Games were being revived in Greece after a lapse of 1,500 years. This was in 1896. Connolly's imagination was immediately fired for he had read Chapman's translation of Homer and he dearly wanted to see Greece. He had already a distin-

guished record in athletics. He was coach and captain of a local football team, he had gained awards in the hundred yards and the long jump and he was the American champion in the triple saute—the hop, step and jump—and this was one of the events on the Olympic programme.

He decided that he would go to Greece and thought he would have no difficulty in getting a couple of months off from his studies. But the College authorities thought differently. He was told that if he left for Greece he should resign and apply for reinstatement on his return. He was aghast at the lack of imagination on the part of the Chairman of the Athletics Committee, but all he said was, "All right, I'm finished with Harvard."

He was wrong in that for fifty years later, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Harvard Class of 1899, Jim Connolly was the guest of honour and he was then awarded his Harvard "H" for track in recognition of his 1896 victory at Athens which, as the *New York Times* dryly remarked, "was a bit late even for Harvard."

He had paid his own way to Athens, as had the rest of the ten American competitors—all but one of them Irish. They arrived in Athens thinking they would have ten days to practise after their sea and train journey, only to find that owing to the fact that the Greeks had their own calendar, they were scheduled to compete that day.

Connolly was dismayed when, on arriving at the Stadium—it was packed—he found he had only time to get into his togs before his event was called. Moreover, he found that the take-off for the saute was not on grass or hard ground but on loose gravel. Afterwards, as Ford Madox Ford tells it, Connolly said: "I was standing between Prince George of England (George V) and Prince George of Greece and the personal magnetism of those two gentlemen was so strong that I said: 'Here's to the honour of the County Galway' and I jumped." His first and only attempt beat the next best competitor by over three feet and he was acclaimed the first man in 1,500 years to win an Olympic trophy. Back home they gave him a royal reception. Later he made a world record with a jump of 49 ft. $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, a record which stood for a very long time.

We next find Connolly in Cuba in the war against Spain. He was with the Ninth Regiment (The Fighting Irish) which was decimated not by enemy fire but by disease caused by the wretched camp conditions and the rotten tinned food. On the way home, only nine men of his company were able to walk ashore from the transport. He exposed the wretched conditions in articles which were printed in the Boston papers and he was threatened with courtmartial, but there was never any trial. He had contracted typhoid malaria and his cure for this was very strange indeed. Against the doctors he held that salt air was the best thing for a malady of the kind and he shipped as a cattle hand on a boat bound for Liverpool. It was tough work amongst tough men but

he apparently revelled in it. He found himself in London stony broke and he tramped all the way to Liverpool to ship on another cattle boat back to Boston.

He had begun to write articles and stories for various magazines. The editors were hungry for his material and after a spell sailing with the Gloucester fishermen in the treacherous waters of the Newfoundland banks, Scribner's persuaded him to take a commission to write a series of articles on English fishermen in the North Sea, the Germans in the Baltic and the Norwegians in the Arctic. This assignment over, we find Connolly a spectator at Kiel Regatta where the Kaiser is a competitor—a losing one. Next he is fishing with the Sea-Lapps out of Hammerfest in boats not unlike those the Vikings sailed in. Next day, or so it seems, he is killing the blue whales of the Arctic—the largest whales of all and he sees the strange sight of whale fighting whale.

He sailed with the American fleet through the Straits of Magellan and hunted mountain lions on the plains of Patagonia.

Back in Boston President Theodore Roosevelt, who had been reading his stories, invited him to come to Oyster Bay and stay with him. The American Battle Fleet was at Oyster Bay for review. Joe Cannon, who was the Speaker of the House of Representatives, commented that the President had brought the U.S. Navy to his back door for his friend Jim Connolly to review.

We next find our hero on another cattle ship, bound for England, and at five o'clock on a rainy morning he has a fist fight with Big Bill of the ship's crew, while the Captain looked on from the bridge. "Bill was no fellow with his fists—few English are—and after twenty minutes he quit".

Connolly was a passenger on the White Star liner "The Republic" when it collided with the s.s. Florida. He wrote a report on the mishandling of "The Republic"—it had continued to go full steam ahead in a dense fog—and the bungling of the rescue operations. In spite of the determined opposition of the officers, he managed to get his report ashore by a very clever stratagem. This report caused a terrific uproar and almost became an international incident.

Connolly saw the Black and Tan war in Ireland at first hand and his comments on the British regime are scathing. He has no use for imperialism generally and his remarks on even the American brand are caustic enough. He saw the children of Porto Rico paraded to sing half-heartedly *The Star Spangled Banner* and his gorge rose. He says:

"Under alien rule there will always be discontent—in time rebellion and ultimately war. Possibly my judgment is swayed by my ancestral Irish blood; and beyond doubt men of Irish blood incline more than most to resent alien governmental pressure, and a good thing too."

He is equally caustic about the chauvinists in the United States who were saying during the last war that after the war

America would have to police the world. He says that people who talk that, like the hatemongers, are people who have never been within miles of a battle front and he holds that soldiers do not talk so. He asks how is America to police the world, and adds:

"The South of Ireland, with a population of $3\frac{1}{2}$ million and a few thousand men armed only with pistols and hand rifles and fighting without cover stood off 80,000 alien soldiers for two years. What about trying to hold a hundred and sixty million in subjection?"

In his old age Connolly has received many honours. He was awarded an honorary degree by Fordham University in 1948; he received the coveted annual medal for the outstanding American of Irish birth or extraction from the American-Irish Historical Society and the Eire Society of Boston conferred a like honour on him, but his proudest day must have been when on his eightieth birthday he was the guest of Colby College, Waterville, Maine, the occasion being the presentation to the College of a complete autographed collection of Connolly's works by the author's old friend James A. Healy of New York.

The President of the College, Dr. Ernest C. Marriner in an address paid an eloquent tribute to the author and quoted the Fordham citation describing Jim Connolly as "The Dean of American Sea Story Writers."

JAMES B. CONNOLLY

BETWEEN SHIPMATES

“**F**RENCHIE” and his old-time chum had not spoken to each other since the vessel had put out from Gloucester, and it was very awkward altogether. Here were two men who had to sit at the same table, to share the same bunk, and to overhaul trawls together in cramped quarters below, each trying, by every evasion of look, word, and deed, not to let on that he knew that the other even existed.

But there was no way out of standing watch, nor of taking the wheel the one from the other and passing the skipper’s word—“By the wind,” “east, half south, and nothing to”—or whatever else it might be. That was the hard thing—they could not conceal it from the crew—the having to speak to each other.

“And what’s it all about?” queried the crew, and they would have liked to smooth matters out but knew better than to attempt it in the usual way, for neither was of the kind that open their hearts to casual inquiry, however well-intentioned. So, though the mystery had not been solved, it was a great relief to nearly all hands when, the vessel having arrived on the grounds, the two men put off to set trawls.

To nearly all. There were yet those who worried. “For, if a hundred-ton vessel is cert’nly narrow for two that’s fallen out, what of a sixteen-foot dory?” mused these. “What of a sixteen-foot dory, where they can’t be passing for’ard or aft without forever fallin’ foul of each other?” and in the most incidental sort of way in the world they glanced over their shoulders—casting about for weather signs by the way—to see what the pair would do in the more restricted quarters.

But nothing happened—leastwise not in the sight of the crew. They only saw that it was Arnold, handiest to the baited tub of trawls, who cast over buoy and anchor; and Frenchie, the man of noted endurance even among a fleet of trawlers, who yanked the thole pins into their sockets and rowed superbly to the west’ard.

Ordinarily those two expert fishermen would not have gone astray that day. In their instinctive fashion both noted the sure signs of fog before it shut out the vessel, but the wires were still down—neither was going to let on by so much as the least anxious exclamation that he felt the slightest concern. Even when the fog had enveloped them, and by concerted action there was yet time to haul their trawls and make the vessel before it was too late, neither betokened, by the faintest sign, his sense of impending peril.

So, the tide carrying them gradually beyond the sound of the

horn, they let her drift. Each was cheerfully prepared to be lost and to die of hunger, thirst, exhaustion, or of all three combined, before he would speak the first word; and even later, when they could no longer doubt, with fog as impenetrable as a wall about and dark night upon them; with death, most likely, close at hand—even then they were prepared to continue the priedful silence.

During all that night their dory drifted, and neither man made a move until dawn. Then did Arnold, who seemed to be waiting only for the light, pick up the low-marked water bottle and, carefully estimating with his eye, mark the half-measure of what remained with his finger-nail. Long he held the bottle aloft, ostentatiously elevated it, gagging with thirst though he was, and even clinked his cold kuckles against the glass; but Frenchie never turned to note the fair judgement. Arnold drank his religious half wrathfully and corked and set the bottle down with a rattle; whereat Frenchie turned leisurely, and, palpably without a look, drank what was left and tossed far away the empty bottle.

The splash of the bottle in the sea was like a signal to action. Arnold, taking the stern thwart and making a place for his feet among the fish, set his oars between the thole pins, and, auricularly assured that his mate was in position, began, by pulling on his left and backing on his right oar, to work the bow of the dory around. Instinctively Frenchie opened his mouth to protest, but, before the word could issue from his lips, bit it off savagely. No, he was not going to speak first; no, not even though speech might mean life to them.

Arnold's ear caught the gurgle behind, and, hoping that his mate was about to say something, paused gladly to hear it. Indeed, to his mind, the matter had gone far enough; but no word came to him, and sullenly he forced the oars through the water. His own ideas of the whereabouts of the vessel were vague, while his dory-mate, as all men knew, had a famous sense of location; and yet, if he didn't care enough about it to say a word, when he saw the dory being headed in the wrong direction, then he wasn't caring either. So away from the vessel, Frenchie by his silence concurring, they rowed the dory.

Rowing and resting—each consulting his own will as to that, but each doing manfully what he considered his share—they rowed on, night and day, and night and day again, with nothing to eat or drink, until the weary pain of it was beyond all mortal strength—certainly for Arnold, who well knew he could never last with the iron man behind him. Arnold by then had lost all count of time—whether three, four, or five days had elapsed he could not say—but he struggled desperately to hold out, determined not to admit himself beaten; and yet he had about made up his mind at last to quit—to say, “Frenchie, I’m done,” nothing else, when—

Frenchie, his eyes half closed, saw Arnold's back lunge forward. An instant later, he saw the oars slide through the thole pins and the body fall on the seat and into the bottom of the dory.

Frenchie did not slack his stroke at once; only slowly did it dawn on him that Arnold really was unconscious. His first thought was one of exultation—and so he had worn him down? But, with another glance at the inert figure, tenderness and pity flashed from him. “No!” he cried, and bent over the limp body. “But so it ees.” Even then he did not address a direct remark to the sagging body, but only picked him up and laid him in the stern. Long ago they had cast away the load of fish, and a light dory rides better for a weight in the stern. So Frenchie mad a pretence of arguing, ashamed to admit even to himself that he had put his mate in the stern solely because it was the least uncomfortable place in the little boat. “And good summer weather,” murmured Frenchie—“and so he shall not freeze.”

Two more days and a night of lonely labour and Frenchie made out a red light bearing down. Perhaps a point off his own course it was, but still a good distance away, and there might be time to place the dory directly in her course. He had hailed a sail only the night before and got no answer. No more hailing at a distance for him! “A good t’ing her wasn’t her starb’d light,” said Frenchie, “or I wouldn’t seen her so soon,” and he tugged hard at the oars. “And now they must pick me up or run me down—and I not certain I care so much if she run me down, for I been damn tired.”

But to be weary was not to be vanquished. No, nor near it. Long days and nights of hunger, thirst, and travail on the lonely seas had not quenched his spirit. They used to say of Frenchie, on the vessel, that, if ever he should come to die, he’d certainly die hard. So “Aboard the barque!” he hailed now—“h-i-i—the barque!” There was nothing of deception in that barrell chest and bull neck. ’Twas the rumble of an organ. “H-i-i—hi-i-i—the barque!” he hailed again, and to such effect this time that not only was the slumbrous watch awakened, but the mate, having a mug of coffee for himself in the galley, came bundling out on deck before the watch could call him.

The mate peered over the side. Coming suddenly from light to dark he could as yet see nothing clearly. “Who is it?” he bellowed.

“Me!” answered Frenchie, from his dory.

The mate again peered over the rail, leaning now far out and down. He at last made out the shadow of the little boat below. “And who’re you, and what do you want?”

“I’m Gloucester-American feesher-man—strayed from my ves—sel in fog. And thees my dory-mate—’most dead—maybe dead. Lower your falls, plees, and hoist heem aboard.”

The resolute tone of Frenchie influenced the mate to quicker action than he had intended. He called for the man on watch to help him. The tackle was unhooked and dropped over. Frenchie made the line fast about his dory-mate, and anxiously observed it as the falls creaked above; and “Tak’ a care—tak’ a care—he

'most dead!" he warned in a plaintive voice as he saw that the body was allowed to knock once or twice against the side of the barque.

"Take care? Who's doing this?" demanded the mate, and therewith, having Arnold's body on board, he allowed it to drop roughly to the deck; and "Come one, you, and hurry," he added, as he lowered the falls again.

"Yes, yes, but not so fast. Now, then, a'right—hoist away."

The men above tugged at the leads. The mate, noting what slow progress they were making, peered over the side. He soon understood what was wrong. "The blasted derelict! He's made fast his boat, too!" Man and dory were being hoisted together. "What in the devil's name does he think?—we're stevedores?" and he let slip the after falls.

Down splashed the stern of the dory and into it rushed the sea. It was up to Frenchie's knees in a moment, and, the men continuing to hoist, the bow of the dory was rearing up. Frenchie, barely grasping the bow falls in time, began to climb, hand over hand to the rope and feet to the side of the barque. A moment later he was on the deck, but such work!

"Cast off!" ordered the mate. "And you—get below, you!" he barked at Frenchie, who was gazing over the side at his dory, now filled and drifting away, and almost sobbing as he gazed.

"You should not do that. Not right—not right—a beau-tiful do-ree, and four tubs fine trawl!" He repeated the words sadly.

"Blast you and your trawls—go below!"

"Oh, yes, I go below." Frenchie leaned against the rail for a moment. "You skipper?"

"No, I'm not skipper. He's below and asleep—and knows better than to wake easy or interfere when it's my watch. But go below, or I'll—"

Frenchie raised a deprecating hand. "Oh, oh—no need, sair"—and he stooped to lift his dory-mate. Arnold moaned as Frenchie raised him from the deck, and "Gra-a—" gurgled Frenchie, and he turned to carry him below; and, as on the vessel he and Arnold bunked in the cabin, so now he headed for the after deck of the barque.

"Come out of that—for'ard with you!" spluttered the mate. But Frenchie, by that time, was carefully descending the cabin steps with never a notion of turning back.

He laid Arnold on the nearest locker. Arnold groaned; Frenchie patted the haggard cheeks. "Steady, boy—steady! Soon you be all fixed up." For the first time since they had put out from Gloucester he touched Arnold with unrestrained tenderness, and the act gave him joy. "Hush, boy, hush!—you soon have the good hot coffee."

"Say it again—the good hot what?"

Frenchie looked up. The mate was at his shoulder, his eyes gleaming satirically. "The good hot *what*, did you say?"

"Coffee," repeated Frenchie. "He 'most dead. One, two,

three"—he counted on his fingers—"seex, maybe seven days, seven nights, astray in hees do-ree. You been astray ever—not'ing to eat, not'ing to drink! He 'most dead, I say."

"And s'pose he was dead altogether—who's in command here? You damn Gloucesterm'n, it's just like one of you to think you c'n jump aboard here in the middle of the night and step into the officer's cabin and give orders. But not here, you don't. Maybe you can do that under your fast-and-loose American-manned, but not aboard this ship. Here"—he slid back a door in the bulkhead partition—"here's where you chaps go."

Frenchie peered in. What he saw was the hold of the bar-que, black and forbidding, piled high with coal. "In there?" Frenchie shook his head. "For me, ver' good; for my doree-mate, no. He need hot coffee and bunk. And hot coffee and bunk he *shall* have, I say." Frenchie articulated those precise words with exceeding distinctness. "And right away—at once, I say. No?" Then, thanking the good God for the strength which all men said he had in abundance, he rolled back his sleeves. The uncovered forearms loomed round, bronzed, and abnormal in development. Small wonder he could row a dory. "Hot coffee for my do-ree-mate, I say. You hear eet?" and, his veins swelling large, he was about to leap on the mate when the cabin boy, awakened from his sleep, stepped into the light. Frenchie spied him. What need to fight, after all? "Get hot coffee and mak' up bunk—a good bunk for my shipmate. Jump! or I lick you, too!"

The boy looked to the mate.

"Oh, you want heem to give order?" Frenchie grimaced frightfully. "Well, in one mo-ment he shall order. Geev him order. No?" The battle was on. An immense creature was the mate, but of no high energy behind the vast muscles, nothing of the fibre of this wild man who had come aboard in the night, and who now, like a demon, saying never a word, but smashing, gripping, throttling, using fingers, fists, elbows, knees—anything—head, shoulders—went at him, and soon made a mess of him. In five or six minutes it may have been, the big glowering hulk had been reduced to a grovelling, bloody mass that sought to draw itself into the remotest corner of the cabin, to shrink itself into the seams of the planking, by way of caulking, as it were.

When there came no further oaths or words of abuse, Frenchie bent his head. "Well?" he asked, and relaxed his terrible fingers that the mate might speak the word.

"Coffee—hot—and biscuit," gurgled the mate to the cabin boy.

"And bunk?"

"And a bunk—two bunks."

"No—one bunk. The coal in the hold plenty good for me," said Frenchie; and on the coal, when Arnold had come to life again and was tucked away in a bunk, he laid himself with heartfelt thanksgiving. *Bon Dieu*, but he was tired!

A long time Frenchie slept. The light of morning was flooding the companionway when he slid back the door in the bulkhead and stepped into the cabin. There was a pot of coffee on the cabin table and beside it some biscuits, to which, without seeking anybody's leave, he helped himself as naturally as if he were aboard his own vessel.

He ate all the biscuits on the table, and with them took four cups of coffee and would have taken more but that no more remained in the pot; after which, with sublime feelings in his heart, he ran up the companionway and all but bowled over a man that he guessed to be the master of the barque, as he leaped onto the deck.

It was a large but somewhat weak-looking man, who gazed admiringly and waved his hand pleasantly as Frenchie was about to apologise.

"You skipper?"

"In the ship's papers I'm so rated." Then, most irrelevantly, he asked, "You don't happen to want a second-mate's berth, do you?"

"I'm feeshier-man."

"I know—I wasn't altogether asleep last night. You're the quality for second mate and you won't have to bother much with navigation. The mate will be most of your concern—just polish him off once in a while. Six or seven days astray, you say?"

"Seex or sev'n—hard to say—yes, sair."

"Lord, the things you could 'a' done, if you'd been fresh!—this morning, for instance."

"This morn!" Frenchie took a full breath and threw his head toward the blue sky. "This morn!"—and he gazed long on the green sea. "This morn!" and, looking ahead, he saw where the horizon lumped like a row of low clouds. "Land? So 'tees—yes. Ah-h—" and suddenly he leaped off the poop and ran forward. "Georgie!"

Arnold, who was leaning over the bow devouring the land with his eyes, did not hear Frenchie's approach; and the latter, as he drew nearer, found himself overcome with the strangest feelings. Perhaps Arnold would not speak to him even now. He stood shy and silent, till Arnold, turning casually, saw him, and, catching the rare look in his shipmate's eyes, could no longer restrain himself. "Hullo, Frenchie!"

Then both were silent. It was almost as if they were in the dory again, with their grim wills in control. But Frenchie had been making up his mind all the length of the deck, and he was not to be overcome now. "How you feel, Georgie? A leetle tired, boy—yes?"

"A little, Frenchie. But if it hadn't been for you, I cal'late I'd be more than *tired*. I'd be dead and gone."

Frenchie fingered the collar of his flannel shirt. "Spick sense, Georgie—spick sense."

"That's sense. And, Frenchie—"

"Yes?"

Arnold looked fearfully at his mate. "Frenchie, 'bout that night down to Long Beach. Why, Frenchie, I had no more notion of tryin' to cut in on you than of—oh, all I saw was a girl that looked 's if she was waitin' for somebody—I'd no notion who for—and I butts in. And when you walked by—why, 'f I'd known 'twas for you she'd been waitin'—"

Frenchie laid a hand on his shipmate's arm. "Her? Georgie—boy, to hell with her. What one damn red-head girl, Georgie, between shipmates?" And so, reunited, they leaned over the bow and gazed fondly at the looming shore of their own country.

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PATRICK GALVIN

THE STATE OF THE GAS

“**T**HE trouble with this country,” said my Father, “is the state of the gas”; and having made this rather obvious remark he folded the morning paper with extreme care and retired to bed—as was his custom each morning after breakfast. And having retired, taking with him his packet of five ‘woodbines’ which he placed under the pillow, a box of matches which he placed on the chair near the bedside, and a bottle of Guinness left over from the night before which he placed securely on the window-sill, he called out—whether to me or to himself I am not sure—that if a man could be sure of the gas he could be sure of almost anything. Then he slept, and I crept out of the house to play football in Mary Street—as was my custom each morning after my Father had retired to bed.

On this occasion I was chosen by a majority of four to be goalkeeper for my team; a position in which I took particular pride as I stood at the Convent gate, which was our temporary post. I can only plead lack of spirit on the part of my opposite number who stood goal near Mr. Seamus O’Riordan’s seventeenth century window—the date was later altered to the twentieth century and proved a fake in both cases—when the ball passed him, striking the glass which unfortunately broke, and the pieces scattered in a multitude of directions making it impossible for either team to play football in Mary Street again. Mr. Seamus O’Riordan was upset, or so he said, and he pursued those responsible through a great many streets waving a particularly dangerous axe above his head and shouting the most abusive language imaginable till exhaustion won the game and he returned home; not forgetting to lay complaints and protestations at a great many doors, including my own.

When I got home later that same evening—having taken the long way round—I had what you might call a premonition of disaster. I arrived at six o’clock exactly—the Church bell was striking the hour—and raising the latch very carefully I entered the front room, when suddenly my Father leaped from behind the door and pounced upon my person in a most savage fashion. I quite naturally protested, but in vain. In due course silence fell upon us and my Father instructed me to remove my shoes, which I did, and then to my astonishment he put them upon the fire, which was alight, and watched them burn. When they had been reduced to ashes he smiled and declared I would on no account play football in Mary Street again; in fact I should not leave the house for several days! Then he retired to bed, which was the second occasion he retired to bed that day. I am sure he believed that with-

out my shoes I would be safe in the house while he slept. This was not my opinion. His last remark to me from the room was to the effect that the state of the gas was in some way responsible for my behaviour.

Now when I was reasonably sure that my Father had reached the safety of sound sleep I entered the bedroom on my hands and knees and removed his shoes from under the bed. They were, to the best of my knowledge and belief, size fourteen. I was not deterred. I filled the toes up with one or two copies of the 'Irish Press' and one copy of the 'Irish Times' and then placed a piece of nearby string about the heels. Though not very comfortable I was not to be denied my nightly outing. I left the house, after raising the latch carefully, and walked down Mary Street with the shoes going flip-flop flip-flop and so forth all the way.

It was an hour later, certainly not more, when I was immersed in a long queue outside the local Kinema that I began to have doubts as to the degree of annoyance my Father would reach on finding his size fourteen shoes missing from under the bed. However, it was too late now for regrets. I remember distinctly that it was on looking towards Patrick's Bridge that I saw my Father. He was charging ahead in a most abnormal manner, wearing what I took to be my Mother's shoes, and swinging a really desperate ashplant. I am sure that if I had stood my ground he would have passed me by. But, no! I ran as quickly as I could across the road with my shoes going flipipipip and flopopopop. My Father saw me and bellowed in such a manner as to cause silence in the street. That is, silence save for the flipipipip and the rather more frequent flopopopop of my size fourteens. I ran through the Arcade and along Oliver Plunkett street and my Father was not too far behind me, bellowing more and more as he drew near his quarry. But it was at the corner of Moore Street as I was about to turn left, with a speed I am sure is unequalled, into Prince's Street that I *crashed* into Mr. "Tiger" Finucane. The horror of that moment! The said Mr. "Tiger" Finucane raised me from the ground with one hand and demanded to know exactly why it was I had tried to destroy such a peaceful man going about his business. He glared at me and he growled at me and then struggled to obtain a reply by the very unpleasant practice, common in such people, of sticking his finger in my eye. As I was about to explain, my Father thundered round the corner and the trinity of us fell in a heap outside Mr. Cornelius Kelly's butcher shop. I was the first to reach a standing position. When my Father and Mr. "Tiger" Finucane stood up I hid behind Finucane. Then the following conversation took place:

Mr. Finucane (in some state of agitation):

What the blazes do ye mane charging round the bliddy corner like that?

My Father (taken aback):

Let MEGET me two hands on that Boy and I'll . . . 'tis unknown what I'll doo . . .

Mr. Finucane (turning to me who is aback of him):

What's all this ABAUTH? Do you know him?

Myself (obviously innocent aback of him):

Me! Sir, I have NEVER seen this man before in my LIFE, but he has been following me all day for some reason or another.

Mr. Finucane (turning to my Father who is frothing at the mouth):

Well, and what are YOU up to chasing little boys like that?
YOU ARE AN UNCLEAN MAN!

My Father (awfully upset):

Isn't he my own SON, flesh of my flesh and bone of his MA!
Do you mane to stand there (this to me) and lie before my very EYES?

Myself (looking to Mr. Finucane for protection):

I told you I have never clapped peepers on thee before!

My Father (not himself and speaking in Green):

DAMN blast FOUL deeds AND corruption.

Mr. Finucane (horrified):

What!

Myself (standing further aback of Mr. Finucane):

That's not nice at all, is it? Think of the GAS.

Mr. Finucane (who it is now clear is an AGAINSTIST):

You ought to be ashamed of yourself! A dirty old man like you chasing little boys! You ought to be put in a home. I'll go and get a PRIEST.

Myself (lovinit):

Go get a PRIEST.

My Father (a DETERMINIST):

Go on then, get a priest, go on!

Mr. Finucane (Gibbering and also frothing over his shoulder):

Take your COAT off . . . I ask ye take yerbliddycoatoff!

My Father (taking his coat off like a duke):

You take yours off too. Then I'll hit ye.

Mr. Finucane (taking coat off striking father with left hand and drawing back quickly to strike twice with right hand):

THERE!

My Father (striking with left hand three times and pushing Mr. Finucane on his back in some orange boxes nearby):

THERE!

Myself (sitting on windowsill some yards away biting fingers and chewing nails):

I had nothing to do with it.

When the Civic Guards arrived on the scene there were hundreds, nay, thousands of people watching the battle. They began to collect as soon as they heard the voices of my Father and Mr. "Tiger" Finucane raised in anger. I witnessed several score of them leaping out of windows wearing shawls, these were mainly women, and hundreds rushing up the road shouting, "What's up, do you know what's up?" It was clear that a great many did not understand the argument, from the remarks I heard. It was also

clear that my Father was not popular with the multitude. "He's a drunkard, too much to drink." "A fella murdered his young son by foul means and Mr. Finucane is trying to hold him for the Guards." "A desperate lunatic escaped from the madhouse, they can't hold him." In general, Mr. Finucane was held in high esteem for his gallantry and honour. But by this time Mr. Finucane lay upon the marble slab in Mr. Cornelius Kelly's butcher-shop window. The glass was broken and Mr. Finucane proclaimed that he was dying.

In vain my Father protested his innocence at the charges brought against him by the crowd. It took six Guards several minutes to arrange him in the car which they had brought for the purpose of removing him to the Station. He shouted for his coat, but some thief had stolen it, while he was under Mr. Finucane. He has never seen it since. I need not stress the fact that my Father was not pleased with me: his coat was stolen, his shirt was torn in pieces and he was held in the Station for some time. He remarked many times to the Guards that he was sure it was not the fault of the gas this time.

It was three months before I returned home, having spent that time in the house of my Uncle in Dublin. I arrived back in the early morning when my Father was having breakfast. He folded the morning paper with extreme care and looked at me. I also looked at him.

SEAN O'MEARA

THE LAST OF HIM

Patrick, the countryman, is gone.
I saw him just a minute ago
Standing on the platform below
With his good clothes on.

God knows how far away he is !
Misty boglands clothe the distance,
Yet, never has their cold expanse
Harmed souls as warm as his.

When yester eve he doled the ale
The mugs were droll as jester bells,
His eyes were kind as holy wells;
And he told a royal tale.

Now the storyteller is gone.
I saw him nigh an hour ago;
He had his best cloth on,
And the train was slow, slow.

FREDERICK ASHE

A FRIEND IN NEED

HE ran up the steps smartly and, lifting the crêpe, knocked at the door. When the young widow opened it he stepped inside and clasped her hand saying how sorry he was. She nodded dully, "Indeed I know, Ned, isn't it terrible!"

The man was parrot-nosed with thick spectacles and a mobile neck which jerked his head continually upwards and sideways, like a bird's on a roof. He kept holding her hand and patting it as her face filled again and flushed. He watched her moist eyes and the soft gleam in her hair from the fanlight over the door.

"Who's inside?" he whispered, bending nearer and looking over her shoulder at the hall, appraising the weather vane and the cheap prints of old Dublin that hung there.

"Just some of the neighbours." She withdrew her hand. "Won't you come in to them, Ned?"

"Only for a minute. Just called to see how you were fixed. Tell me," he beckoned her back with a tilt of his chin, "have you made any arrangements yet?"

"No, then, I haven't. I was more or less waiting."

"That's all right, Cis," he patted her arm, "leave it all to me. Sure Dinny was the best friend a man ever had. We'll slip upstairs later and discuss things."

They went into the front parlour where the company sat around stiffly on the edges of the sofa and the chairs. Nobody thought it seemly to say 'good-evening' out loud so they all nodded gravely and cast their eyes reverently downwards. Several women sat in their outdoor clothes and a young girl of about twelve reclined precariously on her mother's knee but kept sliding her feet on the bees-waxed linoleum and slipping off until she had to be told to stop.

The men leaned forward, wrists on knees, twirling their hats between navy, serge legs. There was no fire in the grate and a damp, musty smell pervaded the room. Ned waved aside the bustle to make room for him and took up his stand by the mantelpiece, opening the buttons of his overcoat. One of the men turned round and looked up at him, "This is a bad business."

"Isn't it now?"

"Aye, terrible indeed." The man kept nodding and Ned took stock of the furniture and especially of the French clock under the large glass shade behind him. He swayed backwards, forwards, on his toes then bent down suddenly to the man's ear, saying, "Very hard on Cis."

"Isn't it then!" The other leaned back eagerly, "without a chick or a child, too, although maybe that's just as well." Then, under his breath, almost, "How is she off,—financially, I mean?"

"That's what I don't know," mused Ned, watching closely. The other shifted about on his chair, then stretched back confidentially. "Well, as a matter of fact," he spoke out of the side of his mouth, "I have an idea there should be a little bit comin' to her out of the Works' Insurance. Mind you," he pulled a face and held up his finger, "I won't be sure. But, then, of course, there'll be the Society money, apart from his own savings. Oh, Dinny was no fool!"

"I see, so she'll be all right?" Ned pondered awhile. "I'm very glad to hear that. Very glad. Because I came down to see what I could do, d'you know?"

"Ah, yes, it's nice to have a friend."

Standing up straight, Ned tried to catch Cis's eye as she sat in the corner with some of the mourners, looking at the centre of the floor and talking softly. "Excuse me," he whispered to the people who sat between them, "would you mind, Cis, if I . . . ?" He pointed towards the ceiling.

"Do, Ned," she said, rising, "I'll show you the room."

She explained to the neighbours that she had a few things to discuss with Ned and they assured her: "Of course, Cis, you go on, we'll be all right."

Ned held open the door for her and followed the shivering folds of her black, silk frock as she preceded him up the stairs to where Dinny was waked. They entered the room on tip-toe and paused at the foot of the bed. Two tall wax candles were lighting and their light in the room was stronger than the natural colour of the evening. The flames smoked a little, then shuddered fretfully as if weary of their long vigil. Ned fell on one knee, blessing himself in the same action. He stayed massaging his eyebrows for almost a minute, then stood up and glanced at Cis who was staring down at the thin, black nostrils that once belonged to Dinny. Ned followed her wan gaze and stepped closer:

"He wasn't in pain?"

She shook her head.

"But he *knew* . . . ?"

"I think he did. He was quite resigned."

"He looks just like the old Dinny we used to know." They surveyed the corpse in silence. "Tell me, Cis, did you take out his teeth?"

"His *what*?"

"His teeth, his dentures."

"Oh, his false teeth. No I — I — they're in his mouth. Why?"

Ned pursed his lips and shook his head. "Now, listen to me, Cissy, you'll have to be very sensible, do you understand? There's a lot of gold in that set of Dinny's, all these things is worth money now. It's not like long ago when things was plentiful and we could afford to be sentimental, don't you understand me? Take my advice and don't let anything go down with him. Is

that a signet ring I see there on his finger? It is, bedad. Now, have a little sense, Cis, for goodness sake, I know where all these things can be sold at the right price." He winked swiftly. "Have you me?"

"Whatever you say, Ned." Unconsciously, she fingered her own wedding ring and avoided his eyes. She commenced weeping softly. "I'm all upset. Sure I don't know whether I'm standing on me head or me heels!"

He moved along the side of the bed and rested his hand tenderly on her shoulder. "I understand, we'll go somewhere else and talk about what you're going to do."

So he assisted her into the back room where all Dinny's clothes were kept in a large press and where several pairs of boots lay gaping open, side by side, under the window. Ned took up a black boot and then a brown boot and examined them. "There's not a brack on them," was his verdict, "not a brack." He replaced them on the floor and raised his head, his eyes darting like parallel bees all over the room. "A fine, airy room, this, Cis. Tell me, where's Dinny's instrument?"

"He used to leave that in the bandroom after rehearsals, Ned."

"In the bandroom, eh? I must pick that up on Sunday morning or some of them fellows'll be usin' it. Good silver cornets is rare now. However," he added briskly, "we'll go into all that afterwards. We must decide what we're going to do about the funeral. Let's see . . ."

He sat on the window ledge and she on the edge of the wide, double bed.

"We'll have to get in touch with the undertakers," he told her, "and then there'll be some refreshments for the mourners and mourning clothes for yourself—by the way, I'll be borrowing that bowler hat I see on the hall stand, if you don't mind. I suppose I'll be in the mourning coach with yourself and I'll have to look me best!"

His face broke into a grin which stopped short for want of an answering flicker in her own stricken cheeks. "Have you," he coughed, "have you any loose change, I mean, there'll be several things . . .?"

"I have the few pounds Dinny used to keep locked in his tin box in case of emergency." She felt at the neck of her dress and drew out a slender cartridge of notes.

"Aye," he said slowly, watching the notes, "that'll help. How much have you there?"

She endeavoured to count the money, on her lap, but the persistency of the roll defeated her efforts and she handed it over to him, saying, "You count them, see how much there is."

He turned sideways and stretched the notes out firmly on the window ledge, ironing the wad with the heel of his hand and, finally, doubling them over once, lengthwise, before holding them

up in front of his face and counting each edge with his forefinger. "One . . . two . . . three . . ."

"Very well, Cis," he said at last, "I'll see how far this'll go—oh, before I forget it! You ought to let me sell that clock below in the parlour for you. That'd be worth something now—maybe only small," he added, "but everything counts at a time like this. Now, I know a fellow in the business. . . ."

Cis stood up uncertainly from the bed and walked over towards the door. "I think we'd better go down to the others, Ned," she said.

He raised his eyebrows in surprise. "Just as you like, Cis, but I thought you were going to show me poor Dinny's clothes?" He crossed from the window towards the press and tried the catch. Cis turned back and opened the press. The doors swung outwards, creaking softly, and Ned forced back the one nearer the window, so that more light fell on the contents of the wardrobe. He fumbled inside and brought out jackets and overcoats on their hangers, his elbow protruding like a wing, to halt the door nearer the window which was swinging to. There was a long, shaped, black coat with heavily padded shoulders, a loose, grey coat and a blue raincoat with a belt. He pulled out a pair of dungarees, several pairs of trousers, neatly folded, and some underclothes from the shelves and then asked, "Had he many shirts?"

"You know," he continued, bringing the clothes over to the window, "Dinny was a very dapper little man, God rest him." He hummed tunelessly to himself and ran his hand up the leg of Dinny's trousers to test the cloth. "A very dapper little man," he repeated.

The wardrobe looked bare then and Cis pushed the double doors together. She kept looking uncomfortably at Ned as he felt the clothes and rubbed the cloth. He fingered the inside pockets and read the makers' tabs. Some of the clothes he left to one side, the others he threw on the bed. "A very dapper little man," he mused.

The dressing-table stood cornerwise by the window and contained two large drawers, one of which closed crookedly, revealing a narrow gap at one side through which Ned could just discern some blue serge clothing. He pulled out the other side and gently evened the drawer before sliding it out and examining the contents. Dinny's band uniform was in the drawer along with some white tops for his band cap.

Ned removed the uniform, hesitated in his removal of the cap tops, and finally threw them back into the drawer, rummaging down further until he felt some mothballs in the corner and the newspaper that covered the bottom. Some pairs of Cis's silk stockings entwined themselves frigidly about his wrists and then his hand came in contact with a smooth, silk garment which he carefully drew out and held up.

"That's only a blouse of mine," murmured Cis.

"Oh."

Suddenly he turned round and asked for some paper. Some brown paper. There was brown paper along with the hat boxes on top of the wardrobe so he stepped over and reached above Cis's head to take it down. She moved away from his breast and watched him wrap up the clothes he had laid aside.

"Some twine, now, Cis."

"As a matter of fact," he was saying, "the uniform is no use to anyone but the band. The Treasurer might make a small allowance on it, but I'll buy the rest of the clothes myself. They're good clothes and can't be repeated nowadays. Of course," he hastily assured her, "I wouldn't have anything to do with them only they're Dinny's. I'll settle up with you when everything is over. Don't worry, I'll see you right."

He stood out in the centre of the room, forefinger on chin. "What else is there now? Oh, yes—the shirts, where did you say the shirts were, Cis?"

"They're downstairs in the passage closet."

"Good, I'll have a look at them on the way down. I always used to admire poor Dinny's shirts. He was a great man for stripes. Them and the white shirts with the hard collars. Very nice on Sundays . . ."

His voice tailed off. With the parcel under his arm, he stood, examining her strangely as her eyes came from the light of the window and faced him. His tone grew soft.

"And you didn't tell me what plans you have for yourself at all Cis. You'll hardly be keepin' on this big place?"

Cis said nothing.

"I suppose Dinny didn't leave you without a little bit in the sock, eh?"

"I think I should be alright, Ned."

"Aye, I daresay." His eyes travelled down from her face to her breast and past her curved hips to her shoes. She stepped back instinctively, a puzzled shadow between her eyes. He threw the parcel on the bed and followed her. "I'll come over now and again to see that you're all right," he said huskily. His voice had lost its abrupt ease and was breathless. His face was so near that the pupils of his eyes appeared inflated and bright behind the glasses. Cis leaned back further until she could feel the side of the bed against the backs of her thighs.

"You'd better go, Ned."

"Aw, now, Cis, you're not going to turn away an old friend!"

"An old friend," he persisted, scarcely above a fluttering whisper, "remember the dances in the Banba Hall? And the balloons on New Year's Eve? But you were always keen on Dinny. I was making the money but you preferred Dinny!"

He placed his hands on her shoulders but she shrank away from his touch and plumped down on the bed just as the sound of a woman's voice came from the stairway, calling,

"Cis! Are y'there, Cis?"

"Up here," Cis ventured, ear cocked, her pallid fingers outspread against Ned's waistcoat.

"We're makin' a cup of tea below in the kitchen, won't y' come down? Y'must be starvin'."

"I'll be down now. We were just coming. Ned was . . . going over things with me." She looked up at him and pushed him away as she struggled to her feet. "Excuse me."

"I'll be down with you," he told her, taking his parcel from the bed and ushering her out with his arm lightly about her waist. "Take things easy," he counselled in her ear, "take things quietly till you get sorted out, and, remember, I'm always on hand."

He was on her heels going down the stairs, "You won't forget the clock in the parlour, Cis,—when things quieten down a bit, I mean?"

Her fingers crossed instinctively from the banisters and sought her rings as if to say, "No, not these. Not at any price." She closed her eyes and could feel the painful pulse of blood in her temples with each downward step. I am too sensitive, she thought. Sure he is only trying to help—he and the neighbours. She didn't know what she'd have done without them all and that was the truth. It was just as if they had taken over her worry, leaving her nothing to do but brood and weep. She was useless at a time like this. She didn't even know what she was going to do when everything was all over and the house became silent again. Trust in God, the priest had said. People seemed to have been good to her and to have been helping her ever since Dinny took bad.

But that was what made her uneasy. She didn't seem to be thinking or acting for herself anymore since Dinny took bad. No, it was bewildering. She had a queer feeling that, somehow, this all had to happen to her and that some future, in this very house, was already ordained for her—a future, perhaps, as a mother, ordained for a long time, since long before she married Dinny.

"Trust in God," the priest had said.

She was crying again. The hot tears welled up in her eyes and the tender skin behind her lashes smarted as she held a handkerchief to her trembling mouth and kept repeating, maybe out loud, she was beyond caring, "No, God . . . No, God . . . No."

PATRICK O'BRIAN

NOT LIKING TO PASS THE ROAD AGAIN

THE road led uphill all the way from the village; a long way, in waves, some waves steeper than others but all uphill even where it looked flat between the crests.

There was a tall thick wood on the right hand for the first half; for a long time it had been the place of the Scotch brothers. They were maniacs, carpenters by trade, Baptists; and one had done something horrible to his brother.

I have forgotten now why I thought that only one brother still lived in the wood: perhaps I had been told. I used to throw things into the wood.

At first they were small things, bits of twig or pebbles from the middle of the road, the loose stuff between the wheel-tracks; I threw them furtively, surreptitiously, not looking, just into the nut-bushes at the edge. Then I took to larger ones, and on some bold days I would stand in an open wide part of the road flinging heavy stones into the wood; they lashed and tore the leaves far within the wood itself. It was a place where there had been a traction-engine and where they had left great piles of things for the road.

Quite early in the summer (there were a great many leaves, but they were still fresh and the bark was soft and bright) I was there and I had two old chisels without handles; they were brown and their cutting edges were hacked and as blunt as screw-drivers, but their squared angles were still sharp. I had gashed a young tree with one, throwing it; it had taken the green bark clean from the white wood.

I had them purposely this bold day prepared, to throw them in with desperate malice: I was almost afraid of them then. I did not throw them far, but flat and hard and oh God the great bursting crashing in the wood and he came, brutal grunting with speed.

Before my heart had beat I was running. Running, running running and running up that dreadful hill that pulled me back so that I was hardly more than walking and my thin legs going weaker and soft inside.

I could not run; and here under my feet was the worst hill beginning. At the gap by the three ashes I jiggled to the left, off the road to the meadow: downhill, and I sped (the flying strides) downhill to the old bridge and the stream, full-tilt and downhill on the grass.

Into the stream, not over the bridge, into the water where it ran fast over the brown stones: through the tunnel of green up to the falls I knew the dark way. I knew it without thinking, and

I did not put a foot on dry ground nor make a noise above the noise of the water until I came to the falls and then I stepped on a dry rock only three times all the way up the side. It is easier to climb with your hands and feet than to run on a bare road. And I came out into the open for an instant below the culvert on the road, a place where I could look back, back and far down to the smooth green at the foot of the old bridge.

It was still there, casting to and fro like a hound, but with inconceivable rapidity. Half way up the meadow sometimes to hit back on the line, so eager, then a silent rush to the water's edge and a check as if it had run into a stone wall: then over and over again, the eager ceaseless tracing back and fro. Vague (except in movement), uncoloured, low on the ground.

There was a cart on the road now, well above the ruined cabin, and I went home. I changed my boots without being seen—they had kept the water out for a long time; in the end the water had come in down from my ankles, quite slowly.

That night and afterwards when I told the thing over to myself I added a piece to make the passing of the road again more bearable. In the added piece my mother came in and said that we were all to be careful when we went out because there was a mad dog. "Joseph was found on the old bridge," she said (Joseph was one of the farm boys) "at the foot of the old bridge, with his face bitten. They have taken him to hospital, but he will not speak yet."

FRANCIS RUSSELL

ARTY CRAFTY

I first entered Harvard from a naive little shabby-genteel country day-school in a suburb of Boston at the time of the Great Depression. In those days few American undergraduates had much interest in politics and government, even though they were really not quite the materialists, the incipient stock-jobbers, the fag-ends of the Scott Fitzgerald jazz era that the more socially conscious generation of the 'thirties supposed them to be. Of the thousand or so freshmen entering Harvard that autumn fully a third were determined to make their way in the literary world, and many a young heart, whether from fashionable St. Mark's School or beyond-the-pale Walla Walla High, was quietly pre-dedicated to the Great American Novel.

At that time the cult of Joyce was just beginning to extend itself more widely in American academic circles from its rarefied beginnings among the overseas initiates. *Ulysses* became the fashion. The fact that it was difficult to come by was an added incentive. It is true that no one was quite sure what the book was about, at least not all of it, but one man's guess was as good as the next one's, and Mrs. Bloom's soliloquy with its wealth of previously unpublished material became almost a shibboleth of the Newer Freedom. S. Foster Damon, who had spent years tracing the turgid symbolism of Blake's prophetic books, now wrote his critical interpretation *The Odyssey in Dublin* for the short-lived *Hound and Horn*. It was printed and reprinted as a special pamphlet and its publication spread the vogue still further. Most of us secretly preferred the simple Wertherism of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*—readily available for seventy-five cents in the Modern Library edition—although we did not dare say so.

Joyce was the last word, like the tattersall waistcoats that were coming in then. Nobody wanted to have an unfashionable mind. There were people of the old genteel tradition, such as kindly Dean Hurlburt who still spoke with regret of Henry James's departure as if it were America's fault and might have been avoided, who looked back to Emerson and felt that Joyce was a kind of anti-pope. To the young Harvard instructors, however, living on pittance in the shabby back streets behind the Agassiz Museum, this cult was a means of challenging the polite academic world of which they were the least common denominator. In private conversations, in the little classes in short-story writing to which the literary-minded third flocked, these earnest, underpaid, and embittered young men, whether they quite realized it or not, preached revolt—as is the way with serious young men in their 'twenties before they have established themselves.

Bernard De Voto, still in his salad days and hack-writing commercial boy-meets-girl stories with a university background for the *Saturday Evening Post*, was the foremost of the lay preachers. This was before he had published his study of Mark Twain and had reached academic dignity himself. "Gentlemen," he used to say, pacing up and down the unventilated lecture-room of Sever Hall, "Joyce is the master stylist of the English language. In him all the styles of the past coalesce. For anyone who wants to write today *Ulysses* must be his Bible and his Koran. I know it is difficult. Speaking for myself, I had to lift myself by my very bootstraps to understand it, but finally I was able to!" In spite of one's seriousness one had the irreverent mental image of the pudgy little man with the tortoise-shell glasses, large feet in still larger goloshes, floating round the fly-specked ceiling of Sever holding the thick blue Shakespeare and Co. edition of *Ulysses* open in his hand.

Our intellectual background was meagre. We were ignorant of scholastic logic, were unacquainted with Goethe's *Faust* even in translation, had never heard of a *Walpurgisnacht*—and Stuart Gilbert had not yet arrived to enlighten us *ex cathedra*. *Ulysses* was uphill work. Yet though we understood little, nevertheless we felt that we had been admitted to some secret society from which our elders were banned. Those of us who were poor used to read Joyce in the treasure-room of Widener Library, where after signing preliminary forms we sat at a designated desk under the sharp eye of a singularly withered spinster. Those of us who had money, however, could buy the paper-covered Paris edition through the intellectual underground at The Kelmscott.

A small green-and-red swinging sign in front of a shop on one of the narrow side streets running off Harvard Square was painted in plain lettering The Kelmscott. Not The Kelmscott Book Store or even the more anglicised Kelmscott Book Shop, but simply The Kelmscott. Its single chaste window displayed a judicious and up-to-date selection of the cultured interests of the moment with nothing commercial to distract the eye. The sense of timing was good. A new book by a semi-somebody like Maxwell Bodenheim would stay in a side corner for a day or two, an edition of Lawrence's *Pansies* would be in a more prominent place for a month, and the dribbles of Joyce's *Work in Progress*, that came over the sea in thin, signed, fantastically expensive rice-paper editions, held the centre of the window for the better part of the winter. The indigenous poets, Aiken, Hillyer, were good for two or three weeks, Robert Frost for longer; but the major prophets were, of course, Pound and Eliot. Occasionally there was a concession to the local scene, such as a special if brief display of Georgie Weller's book *Not to Eat, Not for Love*, billed as the "first adult book about Harvard". The *Hound and Horn* and the *Criterion* were Gog and Magog; *transition's* long shadow lay everywhere.

In its interior The Kelmscott was small and intimate, more a study than a shop. The side walls were lined with bookcases six feet high. Over the wall on the right was a reproduction of a straight line drawing by Picasso of a clown, on the left a brightly-coloured Braque. There were armchairs and a deep sofa upholstered in red leather set against the back wall, above which was Breughel's *Winter*, somewhat reduced in size (and fated to come down again when the Breughel vogue had become too generally popular). Heavy metal ash-trays were placed hospitably on the arms of the chairs and the sofa. The books on the right were English first editions, the somewhat larger selection of books opposite were American. Those near the sofa were the special press and limited editions, the Ashendene Press, the Elston Press, Shakespeare Head, the Golden Cockerel, etc., elaborate reprints of Spenser, *Paradise Lost*, *The Flowers of Evil*, Rabelais, as well as of the moderns, and of which it was assumed that their value would rise with the years—although this was not always the case. It was a catholic collection; first editions from Mark Twain to Hart Crane, from Robert Bridges to the pirated edition of *Chamber Music*, and even—for the sake of history—authors like Kipling, Galsworthy and A. E. Housman.

One could browse through the books for hours, sprawl on the red leather sofa, smoke and read. More often than not there would be nobody visible in the shop. It was a little difficult if one wanted to buy a book, for either the owner was not at hand or if he happened to be there he was so engrossed in doing something else that it seemed almost presumptuous to trouble him. The hours of business, according to a small notice on the door, were from 10 to 4.30; often it was nearer eleven before the shop was unlocked, closer to four when it was locked up again, and there was a period of an hour and a half when it was closed for lunch. Not that anyone ever mentioned it, but it was generally understood that The Kelmscott would buy first editions and autographed volumes of current writers. Only, when one did sell some book, one had the uncomfortable feeling—in spite of the atmosphere—that one hadn't been given such a very good price for it. Still, the proprietor always had the air of being so indifferent to any transaction that it seemed of no moment whether he bought the book or not.

He was a tall rather stooped man in his late 'thirties with a high forehead and thin, receding red hair, a long, somewhat bulbous nose, and almost absurdly small gold-rimmed spectacles that gave his eyes an indefinite expression as if he were never really looking at anything. I do not remember the rest of his features. There was nothing to distinguish them, anyway, except that he had a more florid complexion than is customary for Americans. His name I never knew. He always wore shaggy tweeds, tailored by J. Press, the Gentleman's Tailor near the Harvard Lampoon building. English-country was what J. Press emphasised in his care-

fully restrained advertising. It wasn't really English, but the imitation wasn't bad. A gentleman bookseller he might have been called as he sat in his red leather armchair in the corner under the Braque, smoking a heavy, scented brand of tobacco from Briggs and Briggs, the Harvard Square tobacconist, puffing out clouds of smoke from his blackened briar pipe and slowly turning the pages of some book that had just arrived in the morning post. We all assumed that he had a private income and ran The Kelmscott as a hobby. It seemed a pleasant, intellectual pursuit with plenty of time left to read (and write) and at the same time fill a very definite cultural need in a place like Cambridge, where all the other bookshops were brisk and business-like and of the "text-books bought and sold" variety.

At that time one could go to the rue de l'Odéon in Paris and buy the Shakespeare and Co. edition of *Ulysses* for 125 francs. There were difficulties in smuggling it through the customs, but no difficulty at all in buying it at The Kelmscott. One merely approached the gentleman bookseller as he sat in the corner smoking his pipe and said, "Have you still got a copy of *Ulysses*?"

He would get up slowly, the expression on his face not changing, walk out into the back room and emerge a few minutes later with the familiar blue paper-covered volume lettered in white, hand it over and resume his seat and his pipe without speaking. The price was \$30.

Some time after *Lady Chatterley's Lover* had been written-up at length in one of the week-end reviews The Kelmscott was able to obtain several copies, and the sale of one of these developed into a *cause célèbre* in which the gentleman bookseller became a martyr to freedom of thought in and around Boston.

An agent of the Watch and Ward Society, after posing as a Harvard graduate student, managed to buy a copy of *Lady Chatterley* and then proceeded to arrest the seller on the spot. The Watch and Ward Society is a singular institution the purpose of which is to watch over public morals and ward off influences detrimental to them. Much of its time then was spent in a continuous feud with the Old Howard Burlesque House, an American music-hall that among other things had pioneered in introducing the strip-tease to the United States. The Old Howard advertised itself by life-size photographic semi-nudes in front of the chapel-like exterior of what was once a Millerite Temple, and by its slogan "Always Something Doing, 1 to 11". Many celebrities passed through its doors, including the late Professor Kittredge, the Shakespearean scholar. Occasionally the Watch and Ward would succeed in having it closed for as much as thirty days. At other times the Society would turn to literature. A few years previously it had had a run-in with H. L. Mencken about a story in his *American Mercury*. Now, because of some overheard rumours, the proprietor of The Kelmscott had been tricked into selling *Lady Chatterley*.

The intellectual world came to the gentleman bookseller's defence. A group of Harvard professors signed a manifesto on his behalf, a defense fund was raised, a well-known liberal lawyer who had aided in defending Sacco and Vanzetti volunteered his services gratis. The bookseller was found guilty, but as I remember it was let off with a fine.

Business boomed at The Kelmscott after the trial. The general feeling was that everyone should buy at least a few books there just to show his solidarity with the liberal tradition. But the gentleman bookseller continued to sit in his corner and blow his clouds of perfumed tobacco smoke, as indifferent to customers as ever. Finally he acquired an assistant and spent even less time at the shop.

The assistant was John De Q. Murphy IV, a senior at Harvard, who cut a surprising figure at the college, although what was actually known about him was dubious and conflicting. He never admitted it, but according to the official records he had entered Harvard, so to speak, through the back door, transferring from Tufts College, where he was known as plain John Murphy. The De Q. and the IV he acquired in transit, also an accent that at least on the hither side of the Atlantic could pass for English. There was a certain magnificence in the way he utilised his given drawbacks and turned them to advantages. The name Murphy, connoting in old Massachusetts, Ireland and mass immigration, was considered no password by the remnants of *Mayflower* descendants and New England plutocracy that still controlled the social side of Harvard. De Q., as he was henceforth to be known, met the challenge squarely. He was not just Irish, he was Celtic; he was not merely a Catholic, he was a Papist; he was of the emigrant, the wild-geese Murphies whose heraldic crest he had cut in his signet ring. Assurance he never lacked. Fact and fiction tended to blur in some half-world of his mind beyond the ordinary run of truth, and I think in the end he was not able to separate the imaginary from the real. Emotional truths became more vivid for him than actual ones. It was truer for him emotionally that he had been educated at Winchester than the fact of Somerville High School, truer about the Wild Geese and the crest than that his mother ran a lodging-house. De Q. had an air and he carried it off. He had little or no money it is true, yet somehow he managed. One could never quite picture him taking an ordinary job in his spare time. The Kelmscott, of course, was different.

I had come to The Kelmscott one morning just before mid-day to order a history book. I used to order my text-books there because I couldn't afford much else and felt it was my duty to do what I could to support such an institution. There were two students sitting in the red leather chairs, as usual no sign of anyone else. Then De Q., whom I'd met some time before in De Voto's class, suddenly came out of the back room.

"Oh, hello," he said in his undulating voice, "I'm just un-

packing a lot of new books. Come on in, and when I've finished we can go somewhere and have luncheon." He usually ate at one of the self-service cafeterias in Harvard Square, but was always careful to say "luncheon" and not "lunch".

It was the first time I had ever been in the back room. The place was close and dark, lighted by one small dirty window that was barred on the outside. There were stacks of books on the floor, a table also piled high with books and an old upright telephone, stained walls from which the paint was peeling. In the centre of the room was a smallish packing case with the lid prised off, and a hammer and screw-driver lying on the floor beside it. Beyond, under a green-shaded overhead light hanging down from the ceiling by a frayed cord, was an old-fashioned roll-top desk. It had been moved away from the wall and partly turned towards me and from that angle I could see that it was a singular piece of furniture. The back had been cut away and instead of drawers it had shelves turned into a concealed bookcase, for which the roll-top front was only a disguise that gave it the appearance of a normal desk. De Q. was moving books from the packing-case to vacancies on these impromptu shelves.

"This is our private stock," he said rather airily.

I took one of the books off the shelf at random. It was called *The Sexual History of the World War*. Then I looked closer and saw that the whole back of the false desk was a handy reference library of *erotica*. The classical *facetiae* were there: De Musset's *Gamiani*, Beardsley's *Under the Hill* and his illustrations to the *Lysistrata*, a reproduction of Hokusai's notebook, *Sodom*. Most of the books, however, were anonymous, cheaply bound, poorly written, yet nevertheless accurate and detailed accounts of every conceivable perversion. Some were illustrated, the figures drawn with strange emotionless faces. Carefully arranged as to subject-matter, there was not an abnormality that was not dealt with to the last particular. There must have been several hundred books in the collection.

For these thin little volumes that could at most have cost a dollar to produce the prices were \$15, \$20, \$30, \$50. At first I was shocked, then puzzled. I had never seen such things before, scarcely heard of them.

"Do many people really buy these?" I asked lamely, trying to keep the tone of surprise from my voice.

"Oh, yes," De Q. said, as he arranged the last of the books and pushed the desk back against the wall. "We have all kinds of customers. There's a clergyman who collects books on whipping, and there's a relative of Longfellow's who gets all the ones on pederasty. I can't tell you their names, but there are even people on the Harvard faculty. And women too."

Slow as I was the connection dawned on me. "So that's how old What's-His-Name really makes his living, selling these books in back here?"

IRISH WRITING

De Q. laughed his somewhat affected laugh. "Why, of course." And he pointed toward the front room where I could just catch a glimpse of Breughel's *Winter* with the hawk flying over the cold barren landscape. "You didn't think he could make enough to live on from that stuff in front, did you? That's just his hobby. This is what keeps him going."

(With acknowledgements to the *New English Review*)

TERENCE SMITH

BLANK TESTAMENT OF IGNATIUS DELAHUNTY,

A Fable

I

I felt I had so much to say if only I could see
The proper way to put it and whether it should be
Expressed in a short story, a novel or a play,
A system of philosophy or *pensées* by the way.
And so in cogitation I walked the countryside,
To straighten out the matter. How very hard I tried
To wrest illumination from the reaches of my mind,
To have it right before me—but it always seemed *behind*.
I grew a bit dejected, but I swore that I'd persist.
(No, nothing in the world would cause me to desist).
Which shows that there was mettle in my longing to create;
My heart was in the project, my spirit dedicate.
So, trailing my perplexity along the river's edge,
I paused, one day, on noticing . . . some feathers in the sedge;
White and long and graceful, they had fallen from a swan;
I fingered them—and strangely, my despondency was gone.
Oh, only for a moment! But still I brought them home,
Those delicate *trouvailles*, as flighty as the foam.

II

Thereafter towards the river I would turn every day,
Where, finding further feathers here and there upon my way,
I'd feel the same odd pleasure, an exquisite release
From the long deliberations that never gave me peace.
A study of a sort they were; yes, each was like a word
Of fine articulation. (It wasn't quite absurd,
When I held them in a posy, to think of Poesy's wings).
In *feather-headed* lightness, in a holiday from things
Of so much greater moment, I walked with open eyes
For feathers—how I'd fallen!—of every shape and size;
For some were large and languorous, and some were small and
curled.
And all were of a whiteness as of clouds above the world.

III

A multitude of feathers, serenely out of place,
Lay scattered on my table, where I vainly tried to trace,
Evening after evening, growing more and more distraught,

An outline of an outline of a shadow of my thought.
Impossible! One midnight, more than ever in a maze,
I turned to my table-lamp a blank and beaten gaze,
And suddenly offended by the loathsome tangerine
Of the lampshade, I presented to my aching eyes a screen
By holding up some feathers in a fan against the light:
Oh, calm irradiation! What a solace to the sight,
To say nothing of the spirit. I stared at the soft glow,
As tranquil and as tender as a sunset on the snow.
Away with such comparisons! A habit of the wit,
A sin that I determined then I'd never more commit.
A fig for all my labours! I began to deck the shade,
And was tempted for a moment to declare that what I made
Was a helmet for a creature of legendary rank.
But the beauty of this beauty was its quintessential *blank*.

IRVING D. SUSS

THE 'PLAYBOY' RIOTS

THE question of why Synge's play should have created such a storm has never been adequately answered. Young men and women to-day who see revivals of *The Playboy* at the Abbey frequently ask their elders what all the shouting was about. And they receive varied answers. Andrew Malone, the first historian of the Abbey, attributes the riots to nationalist misunderstanding of the play's import. The nationalists, he says, were hypersensitive to anything that might put Ireland in a bad light before world opinion, and they saw in the play the re-creation of the buffoon-like Stage Irishman which for years they had tried to drive from the boards as slanderously unrepresentative of their country. They considered everything from the point of view of the struggle for home rule, and for them each contribution in the arts, or journalism or in any other field of human endeavour could be an argument for or against their objective. The very fact that the riots were organised—prepared in advance of the first performance—lends some credence to this point of view.

Yeats and Lady Gregory suspected that it was the "far too many violent oaths" that remained, even after she had bowdlerized it somewhat, that had stirred the first week's audience. Others think the audience was demonstrating against a footnote Synge had included in the programme to the effect that there was not one phrase in the play which he had not actually heard from the lips of a Kerry peasant. The rioters, those latter observers believe, misconstrued the footnote to mean that Synge was bringing to the stage what he claimed to be an actually observed event—and this they rejected as impossible in Ireland and a canard on the part of the playwright.

There is no question that the political aspect of the riots was important. Malone felt that the political basis for the disturbances was proved conclusively by protests the following year at the performance of Conal O'Riordan's *The Piper*, a one-act play dealing with the rising of 1798, in the course of which Irish mentality and political tactics are satirised. He might have added the fact that Lady Gregory's *The Rising of the Moon*, which was performed a few months after the Synge play, had been delayed for two years because of objections to portraying a policeman as sympathetic to the cause of a free Ireland, an anomaly which the nationalists would not admit as possible. In this latter case, it was the patriots among the actors who had objected to performing in the play. And certainly the attitude of the professional Irish patriots in America, who organised protests against *The Playboy of the Western World* when the Abbey Players brought it to the

United States on tour during the season 1911-12, would make his point of view even more reasonable.

As they did in Dublin, the directors and players persisted in performing *The Playboy* in America. Every instance of objection had been organised in advance by a small group. The opposition here, though centering about Synge's play, was directed at the Abbey Theatre, which had dared to perform it. A writer to the *Boston Post*, for example, condemned as "vulgar, vile, beastly and unnatural" Lady Gregory's *Hyacinth Halvey* and T. C. Murray's *Birchright*, both of which had won critical and popular applause in Dublin. The *Gaelic American* and Irish patriotic groups prepared a powder train of vilification, abuse and exhortation to riot along the route of the tour, and audiences responded by throwing potatoes and other objects at the performers. One gentleman, swept up in the general excitement, threw his watch at the cast, but he grew calm enough later to call for it at the stage door after the performance.

Participation in the riots became a kind of touchstone of patriotism. The then clandestine Irish Republican Brotherhood, which ordinarily discussed new candidates for membership at great length, accepted immediately and without investigation one man who had been among the rioters and who could show that he had been fined a few shillings for his part in the row.

But all these incidents prove only that the *organisation* of mass protests was nationalistic in origin, political in intent. The objectors condemned without viewing, as objectors often do. The original attitude towards *The Playboy* must have stemmed from people within the theatre itself, for the political organisers had had no opportunity to form an opinion except as it might be a carry-over from the puritanical opposition to Synge's earlier *The Shadow of the Glen*. But *Riders to the Sea* had appeared before *The Playboy* and had met with acclaim eventually.

In the political context of the time, there was, it is true, a touchiness among the Irish that is characteristic of any subjugated group fighting against the inferior status to which it is condemned. This sensitivity is a psychological, rather than a political phenomenon, though it grows out of a political situation. Since *The Playboy* could be said to have political connotations only by the most violent stretch of the imagination, an interpretation of the play that would make it an argument for one side or the other in the controversy between Ireland and England would lack the kind of credibility necessary to create the outburst it engendered. But the inflammable situation could be ignited by probing and exposing a psychological skeleton which most would prefer to leave well-hidden in the communal closet. And this *The Playboy* did.

It is not necessary to be conscious of the direction and aware of the meaning of a work of art to be affected by it. Like music, literature can create its own waves of feeling in man. Played with a light touch or with the most meticulous naturalism, Christy

Mahon remains for Irishmen a symbol of a deep-felt need, an unsocietal wish. Whether or not what he represents can be comprehended on a conscious level, Christy Mahon's countrymen respond to the feelings the symbol creates within them. And because these feelings deny and would destroy the surface pattern of the community within which they live and which they are impelled to uphold, they are consequently impelled to deny and destroy the symbol.

Bruised and battered by conquest, Christy Mahon comes to a strange village, and, when he tells his story of achieving freedom and power by killing his father, he is wondered at by the men, adored by the women, and subdues all opposition. His father, who has been only stunned by Christy's blows, appears and attempts once more to assert his authority, whereupon the adulation of the crowd fades, and Christy falters. But having once tasted the fruits of success, Christy rejects submission, and vows that in the future old Mahon will be stewing *his* oatmeal, and washing *his* spuds, for he is "master of all fights from now on." And Pegeen, the girl who would have married him if he had not seemed to topple from his height, breaks out into "wild lamentations" as she realises that she has lost "the only Playboy of the Western World."

Synge himself must have chosen his title in full realisation of the significance of his play. Christy is more than a local village yokel who has accidentally struck his domineering father. He has a reality that transcends his parish, as he himself realises, a life that goes beyond his own grave and continues in the generations that follow, for, he says, he will "go romancing through a romping lifetime from this hour to the dawning of the judgment day." Christy is the new god that destroys the old: Saturn, the conqueror of Uranus; Zeus, Saturn's death.

Ireland is a dual patriarchy, and Irishmen submit to priest as well as parent. Unlike other Catholic countries such as Italy and Mexico, Ireland does not permit the luxury of nominal religion and practical freedom. The controlling morality of the Church is not more honoured in the breach there, and significantly, the men as well as the women practise the ritual with diligence. The predominance of women in the churches of Italy makes a striking contrast with the churches of Ireland, more heavily attended by both sexes and in about equal numbers. The stringent sexual code of the church, observers agree, is in no other country in the world so strictly adhered to as in Ireland. In addition to this the power of the parent is extended far beyond the usual time. Forces combined with religion, chiefly economic, have made the late marriage of the men in Ireland a social problem that is of concern to the government and population experts. Living with their parents, with the father traditionally dominant, long beyond the usual age of emancipation, Irishmen are chafed by a double bridle.

In this social context the self-liberation of the Playboy by violence—especially by violence—was a picture of the hidden dream of the Irishman brought into the light of day. There was no intervening censor, no concealing dream-work to distort the wish and make it acceptable to the consciousness. Freud's reality principle operated in the mass, and there was a violent effort to suppress the feeling that the play generated and made recognisable. The countless reasons that Irishmen have adduced for the 'Playboy' riots were only further efforts to deny a subconscious desire that conflicted with the accepted pattern of every-day life.

What reason is there for assuming that of the two opposed portraits of Irish psychology, philosophy and character the one is true and the other false, that one has behind it the conviction of sincerity and the other is flimsy and fundamentally disbelieved even by its creators? In the first place it is legitimate to assume that literary quality is in part dependent upon the integrity of the artist and to the extent that integrity is necessary, it is absolutely necessary. On the basis of this axiom the honest attitude would be found in that series of literary works which I have already used to delineate the Irish outlook on life.

The above is an extract from Mr. Suss's forthcoming book on the Irish theatre, entitled 'Plays, Politics, and the Irish Tradition'.

DAVID MARCUS

FROM JOYCE TO JOYCE

About seven years ago Frank O'Connor, in a B.B.C. talk on James Joyce, made the following differentiation between the British and the Irish: 'The British', he said, 'have an historical background they can take for granted, and a social system that draws them out of themselves and licks them into shape. In Ireland you can never forget the absence of these two things. Whenever a young man or woman has any brains, he does not find anything to draw his imagination outward. It all sinks back into himself again and he becomes subjective.' One result of this, in Frank O'Connor's argument, was that 'in a certain sense you can almost always identify an Irish writer by the monstrous development of his natural egotism,' and *Finnegans Wake* he adduced as 'the culminating point of Irish literary egotism.' Beyond *Finnegans Wake* 'there is the asylum; behind, a long, long way behind, is the reality to which our younger writers must sooner or later retrace their steps.'

It is interesting to note to what extent in the past seven years that distinction—in common with many others—between the British and Irish has tended to disappear and how, as a result, the general character of Irish literature has undergone, and continues to undergo, a gradual, inexorable transformation. Contemporary Irish literature, or, more accurately, contemporary Irish writers, are only too happy to be left alone and allowed take their historical background for granted simply because in their youth they had a bellyful of it rammed down their throats. Therefore, and quite naturally, we find that Ireland's fight for freedom, as a literary theme, receives less and less attention. The emergence of such a situation constituted just what was required to clear the way for the fostering of a social system which could serve the Irish writer in the way the British writer has always been served by his. In this respect, however, Ireland has not yet succeeded in planting and growing such a system—there is still unfortunately too much truth in Frank O'Connor's assertion that the young Irish man or woman of any brains does not find anything to draw his imagination outward. But whereas, up to seven years ago or so, the combination on the same side of the scale of the twin weights—lack of the kind of social system just outlined and the inability to take the historical background for granted—produced the glut of subjectivist writing which, for Frank O'Connor, made the Irish writer almost always identifiable 'by the monstrous development of his natural egotism', the ability since then developed of taking the historical background for granted has moved one of the weights over to the other pan and so balanced the scales. As a result

Irish literature has been saved from a further dose of subjective orgies; and that the reality to which, as Mr. O'Connor pointed out, 'our younger writers must sooner or later retrace their steps' has already begun to be its main concern, Irish novels of the past few years amply demonstrate.

Needless to say, this development has not gathered in its wake every new Irish writer, and one who, on the basis of his first novel anyway, has kept himself apart from it is Bryan MacMahon.* Here indeed is a writer who can be identified as Irish by the 'development of his natural egotism'. Not that such a development is of itself, either generally or in this particular case, a disadvantage; but if it is allowed to become 'monstrous'—and with MacMahon the danger exists—then it can become much more injurious to the writer than a mere disadvantage. For, as Frank O'Connor pointed out, an important characteristic of the egotism of Irish literature was a preoccupation with style—'the style is the man, and the Irish writers never allow you to forget the man'—and such a preoccupation is the infection which Bryan MacMahon carries.

The characters of his *Children of the Rainbow*, finely-drawn though they be, are nevertheless mainly of the 'picturesque' breed—the simple-sage, sugar-speech gallants that popular fancy outside Ireland is said to imagine—and the colour of the rainbow is mainly purple. But what is more important a defect, *Children of the Rainbow* is a novel only by fits and starts; what little direction it has is constantly being interrupted while the author goes on an anecdotal spree.

The story concerns the doings and thoughts, public and private, of twenty-one year old Ches MacNamara (significantly enough it is recounted in the first person) his friends Finn Dillon and Lord Caherdown, and various other characters in and around the village of Cloone. The real point of Ches as a character is that he is just emerging from adolescence and thus suffering the delights and tortures which that process entails. He is, or seems to be, in love with two girls, Edith Mallory of the Manor and Madcap O'Neill of the village, and Bryan MacMahon has very brilliantly and quietly achieved the right effect of superimposing one state of love on the other. Finn Dillon, the Prince of Cloone, who is the best-realised study in a teeming gallery of portraits, is in love with Shoon Lawlee but this shy love is poorly handled. Without any warning or seeming necessity the author whisks Shoon out of the book to work

* CHILDREN OF THE RAINBOW, BY BRYAN MACMAHON
(Macmillan, 15/-).

TRUTH IN THE NIGHT, BY MICHAEL McLAVERTY (Cape, 12/6).

DECEMBER BRIDE, BY SAM HANNA BELI (Dobson, 10/6).

THIS PLEASANT LEA, BY ANNI CRONE (Heinemann, 13/6).

LEAVES FOR THE BURNING, BY MERVYN WALL (Methuen, 10/6).

in Dublin and then whisks her back again, carrying in her the child which some man in the city has seduced her into conceiving—an occurrence for which the previous delineation of the character gives no basis whatever. But it affords MacMahon the opportunity of introducing a melodramatic death in childbirth, a tyrannical priest who will not allow Shoon's body into the deadhouse, a chapter written in play-dialogue from on the merits of the case, and the utterly theatrical gesture of having the priest undergo last-minute remorse and come up with a nick-of-time visit to the graveside to conduct the obsequies. Bryan MacMahon cannot resist giving every screw a final turn: when he stops too long at the fair to describe a cow being sedately milked outside the barricaded cottage of Lord Caherdown we know that within a few pages poor Caherdown's cottage will be almost a mass of rubble under the hooves of the berserk animal. So it is! And the gusto and effects with which the author describes the wrecking remind one of nothing more than of Mack Sennett's pie-throwing comedies—pure, pointless slapstick.

Mr. MacMahon's way of ending his novel is correspondingly arbitrary and draconian. He has to enlist Finn Dillon in the I.R.A. who up to now have never been mentioned and then he tells no one in the village about it till it is all too late for he has got Finn involved in the killing of a policeman over the Border and hanged for his trouble. This allows him to make the hero, Ches, the new Prince of Cloone, but in order to give purpose at last to the character he has to burn down the village so as Ches, now manly and mature, can lead them in rebuilding it. Certainly, for Bryan MacMahon, 'nothing succeeds like excess', and he accompanies his flood of events with a flood of words which, if it is purple, is almost consistently high-grade purple, and with a faculty of observation and description coupled to a capacity for moving the reader which make the writing in this book a sheer binge of delight. There is no other writer like him in Ireland to-day and for that alone he would be valuable. But because he is so much himself, and because in his other work—his short-stories—he was beginning to show that self capable of the discipline that is vital if his development is not to become 'monstrous', he is even more valuable for his potentialities. At the moment, however, he is anything but a novelist—rather, more fairly, he is *everything* but a novelist.

The first stage in the journey out of subjectivism is logically towards regionalism and the Northern Ireland novelists—helped no doubt by the character of their social system—have been figuring prominently in this advance. Two of the latest novels by such writers are excellent examples of this genre—Michael McLaverty's *Truth in the Night* and Sam Hanna Bell's *December Bride*. They have a great deal in common: both grow out of a small, compact, farming unit—McLaverty's being set in a Catholic community on the island of Rathlin off the Northern Ireland coast, and Bell's in

a Presbyterian community in Ravara, a village near Belfast. Both are superlatively written, with characterisation and descriptions of the countryside that are quite masterly; both include illegitimate children as vital agents in the respective dramas; and the cruel manner in which these agents learn from outsiders the truth of their origin forms a major crisis in the development of both stories. Yet, while Sam Hanna Bell's novel strikes one as a complete success, the delight and satisfaction derived from Michael McLaverty's is not without a small reservation—the cause of which was nailed by Sean O'Faolain when, reviewing the book elsewhere, he accused the author of attempting too little. McLaverty's material somehow seems unequal to his great powers—the very restricted story concerns Martin Gallagher, aged thirty-six, who returns to his native Rathlin after sixteen years work away from it, and settles on his farm next to that of Vera Reilly, a thirty-three year old widow who has a twelve year old daughter, Mary. Vera's in-laws (mother, son and daughter) live near her, the son constantly trying to frustrate her efforts to hook Martin, the mother not going against her, and the rather shadowy daughter, somewhat neglected by McLaverty, taking little part. Vera Reilly is a thoroughly bad piece of goods—she forgets to go to Mass on the second anniversary of her husband's death, she deliberately holes his model yacht as a result of which her brother-in-law, who worships his memory, loses a vital race to Martin, and she treats Jamesy Rainey the illegitimate youth whom Martin has brought from an orphanage to help on the farm, with great inhumanity, finally telling him what he is and causing him to run away. Martin, who, by contrast, is a thoroughly good person, is easily hooked by her, and though repenting somewhat of his decision, keeps his word and marries her. At this stage one wonders if even Michael McLaverty feels some misgivings about the adequacy of his story for he, somewhat impatiently and unsatisfactorily, ends it all by having Mary die of appendicitis and Vera die after her, having had first a death-bed remorse of conscience for her badness and then a miscarriage. There is, of course, more in the story than this brief synopsis suggests but one feels that despite the expert achievement of effect and the master-craftsman's reproduction of detail, Mr. McLaverty's picture suffers from too small a lens and too rigid a focus.

On the score of development and subsidiary themes Sam Hanna Bell's *December Bride* is superbly handled. Here thirty-year old Sarah Gomartin and her mother go to keep house at Rathard for old Andrew Echlin and his sons, Hamilton and Frank. The father is drowned but the Gomartins stay on. Sarah becomes the mistress of both brothers and fights with her mother who leaves. Sarah does not mend her ways and eventually gives birth to a son by Hamilton (the news that she was pregnant kills her ailing mother) and rejects Rev. Sorleyson's suggestion that she get married, by pretending that she does not know which brother is the father. The minister is a wonderful creation and the story

of his own unhappy marriage and sudden indiscreet advance to Sarah is unfolded with the maximum of feeling and conviction. The villagers grow hostile to Sarah and the two brothers, Frank gets fed-up with her and tries to court a village girl but is beaten up and maimed for life by the girl's family. Sarah has a daughter who, upon growing up, gets engaged to a Belfast youth, and because the situation is somewhat embarrassing for them, Sarah, now fifty-seven, is persuaded at last to marry Hamilton. This is a novel in which the only confusion is caused by the perhaps unnecessary opening chapter where the reader is pitched right into the wedding of Sarah and Hamilton, and the consequent flash-back is momentarily unsettling. Otherwise it is full of beauty and tenderness and a command of the novelist's craft which, for a first attempt, is quite outstanding.

One is tempted to put *This Pleasant Lea* by Anne Crone—yet another Northern Ireland writer—into the category of the regional novel along with *Truth in the Night* and *December Bride* but one suspects that it would never quite fit—parts of it would always overflow and to press it in here would be to push it out there. True, its setting is the village of Derrygawley near Lough Erne, its characters are members of Protestant Irish families who have spent all their lives on the land, and it has, where necessary, dialect conversation and Gaelic colloquialisms. Yet in both temperament and temperature it is not Irish; and insofar as it is a little more than an Irish novel it is a little more than a regional novel.

The heroine (and she is a heroine in the real, old-fashioned sense) is Faith Storey, a young schoolteacher, daughter of widowed Mrs. Storey, whose farm is now reduced almost to bankruptcy by the neglect and mis-management of her son, Frank. Frank brings worse shame and sorrow on the family by getting frisky, shallow-minded Lily Veitch into trouble and having to marry her, and Faith underscores her mother's despair by rejecting the advances of staid Mark Liddell, their next-door neighbour, who has a large farm all to himself. There is some brightening of their prospects when artistically-minded Anthony Fletcher, son of the successful solicitor in nearby Castlerivington, meets and falls in love with Faith. But his family object to the union and his father suffers a paralytic stroke as a result of Anthony's determination. Anthony, saddled now too with the job of keeping up his father's practice, grows further and further away from Faith. Her brother Frank, who before long had begun to tire of Lily Veitch—and she of him—takes to drink when she runs away leaving her new-born baby to the care of his mother and he eventually emigrates to far-off continents. Anthony allows the understanding between Faith and himself to lapse and he marries the beautiful, wealthy Alison Greelees. Before long he realises that his love for Faith is too strong to forget and his wife conveniently dies, leaving him free to throw himself at Faith's feet again. She, however, resolutely

rejects him and takes instead the hand of Mark Liddell.

In many ways this novel is full of perplexities that continually defeat one's conclusions. It is, surely, a blood-relation to the old, 'morality' novels, like those of Thackeray and the Brontës where Constancy is rewarded and Virtue triumphs; indeed, the moralising style of the writing and the allusion, here and there, to the gods of classical antiquity, emphasise the resemblance. But what is the heroine's reward? And wherein does true love triumph? Then, again, one cannot shake off the persistent tang of the modern, romantic circulating-library novels which *This Pleasant Lea* has. For instance, when Faith and Anthony meet, the author contrives to have their hands touch accidentally and she makes the usual capital out of the situation. But the writing is vastly superior to what suffices in the average library-novel and Miss Crone's touch is distinctive and commanding.

Despite the fact that the author tends to dilly-dally too much with her situations—that she frequently leaves too little to the reader's intelligence and imagination—that her easy style sometimes becomes easy-going—*This Pleasant Lea* still has an amplitude absolutely unique in contemporary Irish fiction. If the development of the male characters does not always keep pace with the development of the plot, the female characters are never anything but rich, real, and completely satisfying. This novel is only Anne Crone's second and it is by no small amount better than her first, *Bridie Steen*, which was itself a surprising debut.

The next stage after the regional novel is, of course, the national novel, in which the writer's country is the real hero—or, one must add, the villain, since Mervyn Wall's *Leaves for the Burning*, one of the few examples of this genre in recent years, is a satire on Ireland. The story revolves around forty-three year old Lucian Burke, a minor civil servant stationed in the village of Barrettstown, and his ex-school chums Bob McMunn, County Engineer in the neighbouring town of Moymell, and Frank Peebles, an artist-given-up-the-ghost, who starts off from Dublin to walk to Yeats' funeral at Sligo but on the way collects Lucian and Bob, and a tight circle of friends, acquaintances, and strangers. They all go off on a desperate drunken binge across country in the process of which they, unwittingly, kill a man who had been annoying them. The various personal stories are perfectly woven into the larger pattern—Lucian's letter to the press which almost loses him his job, his visit to his voluntarily bed-ridden mother in Dublin, Bob McMunn's domestic unhappiness, Frank Peebles' bitter artistic soul—and the larger pattern in which the Irish character and system are quite mercilessly flayed is absorbing and startling, if not always perfectly fair. Now and again, early on, the satire is weakened by small points such as where the poster for the latest film in Barrettstown reads: "Peerless Pamela Punk in 'The Marvellous Magdalene'". This may be satire on Hollywood but in its present context is nearer fantasy and momentarily blurs

the picture. The description of Lucian's working conditions and the larger background atmosphere of the whole novel are almost Kafka-esque. There is a gargoylishness and the dead despair of inevitability about everything—the memo Lucian sends to his superiors every year regularly asking for office-improvements and the cold, unchanging reply he always receives; when he raises his head to look out the window all the author can give him to see is a scavenging rat; and when a labourer applies for a new employment card he explains that he lost the first one by putting it in his pocket where (of all things) 'the mice ate it'.

Leaves for the Burning is a very brilliant novel arising out of and at the same time manifesting both courage and despair. It suffers only—and then not always—from the gravitational pull that draws satire towards exaggeration. But exaggeration is also the ogre lying in wait for the novel of 'natural egotism', and as between Bryan MacMahon's *Children of the Rainbow* and Mervyn Wall's *Leaves for the Burning* the advantage is with the latter, for one feels that it is based a little more on fact than on fancy. What we need now are a few more writers who will explore this medium of a national novel from as many different approaches as they can—and then, albeit a far-away then, we shall be ready for the final stage in the journey of contemporary Irish literature—the Irish novel that will be also a universal novel; in other words, for another Joyce, but this time a Joyce unblistered by the Irish writer's 'natural egotism': a plain man's Joyce.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE WEB OF NATIONALISM

IRISH NATIONALISM AND BRITISH DEMOCRACY, By E. STRAUSS. (*Methuen*, 21/-).

THE LAST OF THE IRISH R.M.s, BY SIR CHRISTOPHER LYNCH-ROBINSON. (*Cassell*, 15/-).

These two books are to some extent complementary. Mr. Strauss, who is an Austrian by birth, gives us a comprehensive study of the Irish nationalist movement more particularly in relation to its remarkable influence on the political development of Great Britain; Sir Christopher Lynch-Robinson, who was one of the last of the resident magistrates under the British regime, provides a personal description of the end of that period from the point of view of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy. There is, however, no comparison possible as regards the content and value of the two volumes. Mr. Strauss's book is of the first importance, a clear, penetrating and independent survey of modern Anglo-Irish relations comparable only to Paul Dubois' brilliant volume *Contemporary Ireland* which appeared at the beginning of this century. Sir Christopher's book, on the other hand, is merely a chatty autobiography interspersed with shrewd comments on Irish life and affairs. The major portion of Mr. Strauss's book is devoted to a critical analysis of the forces, political and economic, which moulded the history of these islands during the period from 1801 to 1921. In particular he shows how the Anglo-Irish nexus affected the political development of the ruling nation almost as deeply as that of the unwilling victim. This connection, he points out, however painful and tragic for generations of Irishmen, raises Irish history from that respectable but limited level of the chronicle of a brave and unfortunate small nation to the sphere of world history. In the first half of the 19th century the Irish question caused the defeat of three important British Governments, made the Catholic Question a serious issue of policy, set in motion the train of events which culminated in the Great Reform Bill of 1832, and was the proximate cause of the crisis which ended in the Repeal of the Corn Laws—the two outstanding social and political measures of that period. In the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th, Ireland, through its representatives at Westminster, revolutionised the procedure of the House of Commons, paralysed the power of the House of Lords, and finally, as a member of the British Commonwealth, made its own very decisive and unfortunate contribution to the centrifugal movement which seems destined to soon destroy the coherence and potency of that remarkable institution. Indeed if, owing to the weakness

of a Socialist government and the studied indifference of the United States of America, the British Empire is dissolving before our eyes, and the domination of Britain is now contested on all the Seven Seas, the root of the matter can be found in the past influence of Ireland on British and world affairs.

All this and much more is related in detail and with shrewd comment by Mr. Strauss, and every page of his book contains food for thought. As he sees it the over-riding problem which confronted the Irish people was its colonial dependence on a ruling power which cramped the development of every group and class. In his view the struggle between the Irish middle class and the under-privileged masses though concealed by the national struggle assumed the form of conflicting national aims—Home Rule on the one side, Separation, perhaps in the form of a socialist republic, on the other, with Sinn Fein as a compromise solution. The victory of Sinn Fein over the Home Rule Party and the subsequent bloody struggle between constitutionalists and republicans within the victor's camp was, he believes, the last stage of a development in which every national victory had been won by the sacrifices of the masses and exploited by the middle class. This is of course an over-simplification of a complicated story but it is fundamentally true. Like many other people he finds it not a little paradoxical that the severance of the last link between Ireland and the British Commonwealth should have been the work of an Irish party which had always advocated closer relations with Britain, and he rightly points out that had the inter-party Government waited a few weeks for the Indian solution they could not only have combined the status of a sovereign republic with membership of the Commonwealth but, what was equally important, have left the door open for an accommodation with Northern Ireland. As it is Mr. Costello has achieved a doubtful fame by making the problem of Partition insoluble, for no taunts or arguments can now disguise the crucial fact that reunion by consent is impossible between two groups of peoples one of which will not accept membership of the Commonwealth at any price while the other is determined to maintain it. The truth is that no modern Irish leader, with the possible exception of Mr. de Valera, seems to have realised that one cannot have one's cake and eat it. They have in fact consistently refused to recognise that it was impossible to have both an Irish Republic and a United Ireland as they were mutually exclusive; so the end is the present ridiculous and dangerous *impasse*. The idea that Great Britain could undo Partition against the wishes of the Ulster majority and that it is possible to create a united Ireland on such a basis, is itself, as Mr. Strauss points out, a curious relic of colonial times not befitting the spokesmen of a free people. There is one strange, and perhaps calculated, omission in Mr. Strauss's book. It contains no reference to the Irish language movement which has in fact exercised more influence on Irish political development since Parnell than it has on the revival of

the Irish language. This is nevertheless a book which is bound to take its place amongst the standard works on modern Ireland and it provides a mine of information and thought for every student of Irish politics.

Sir Christopher Lynch-Robinson's book belongs to quite another *genre*, and although it is both agreeable and amusing it cannot be called important. Descended on his father's side from a long line of naval officers and Anglo-Irish bureaucrats, and on his mother's from the Norman Lynchs of Galway, one of whom achieved fame by executing his own son, he was inevitably destined for an Irish government job and he approached the office of resident magistrate by the usual, if somewhat eccentric, road of a military career for which he had little liking. His comments on the British judicial system in Ireland are illuminating and he rightly points out that it was, so far as courts of minor jurisdiction were concerned, more democratic than our present dispensation. The present reviewer can indeed remember a prosecution of a vendor of adulterated milk in the old Petty Sessions Court where the R.M. announcing the decision of a 'packed' bench of local J.P.'s inadvertently remarked that "a majority of the *defendants*" had dismissed the case! No such democratic interference with the course of justice could now take place in a Court where a Government stipendary magistrate is the sole judge. The book contains some good stories but also several 'chestnuts'. Amongst the former may be mentioned the tale of the 'boots' in an Ulster hotel who on being asked which lady of an official party was the Chief Secretary's wife, replied "I couldn't rightly say, but anyway he slept with the one yonder in the red hat". Sir Christopher's comments on Irish problems, if naturally coloured by his background are both shrewd and wise. He points out for instance that relationship rather than religion is the best passport to an Irish job, and he emphasises not only the Northern objection to clerical interference in civil affairs but also its alarm at the dictatorial manifestations of the British Socialist State. He himself, although a Protestant, believes that the Catholic Church has "always been a steady influence in Ireland, and may yet prove a steady influence far beyond Irish frontiers." Reading between the lines one gathers that Sir Christopher, surveying his past career from an English home, still hankers after the flesh pots of the Gael. His book which is both sensible and good-humoured will undoubtedly contribute to Anglo-Irish understanding for as he aptly remarks "the Irish idea of the English is every bit as grotesque as the English idea of the Irish."

JOHN. J. HORGAN.

BREAD AND JAM

LOVE AND ROBERTA, BY LYNN DOYLE. (*Carter Publications, Belfast, 12/6*).

THE THREE WISHES OF JAMIE McRUIN, BY CHARLES O'NEAL. (*Harrap, 12/6*).

Lynn Doyle's comic mask hides a shrewd, unsentimental eye. His humorous short-stories form a gallery of North of Ireland rural types, and the people in his new novel are of the same sort. But it is easier to strike sparks of fun from these flinty characters than to kindle among them the flame of romance. Matchmaking, excellently described, and some shabby philandering are not enough, so *Love and Roberta* is inaptly described by the publishers as a 'romantic novel'. It is the story of what may happen when all the natural instincts of youth are subordinated to practical considerations. One senses the author has scant regard for romanticism. His respect is for Mr. Grough, the land-grabber, whose only weakness is his love for the pretty young Roberta, and whose business of collecting mortgages on his neighbours' properties is not noticeably interrupted by his autumnal passion. But Lynn Doyle can tell a story. Whether or not one likes his characters, his handling of his plot is adroit and holds attention to the end.

How much more romantic Ireland and the Irish become at a remove! *The Three Wishes of Jamie McRuin* by Charles O'Neal, an American of Irish extraction, is set in the mould of an old Irish folk-tale. Here are Irish tinkers become horse-dealers in Georgia—enormously mellowed in the transplanting. The time is the eighteen-eighties, the climate, whether of Connaught or Georgia, U.S.A., warmly sentimental, the moral is sound, the pace fast. Though sometimes inaccurate to native ears the 'Irishness' of speech is not offensive. The fantasy is well rooted in Standish O'Grady. What more could one ask? Perhaps just a little more bread with all this jam. The blurb says the book has already had considerable success in America where it won a literary award. It is to be the story of a stage 'musical'. It would make a good film and has an innocent charm reminiscent of the work of Maurice Walsh, but it is not for the sophisticated.

MAIREAD MacSWEENEY.

IRELAND'S ABBEY THEATRE, A HISTORY 1899-1951, Compiled by Lennox Robinson. (*Sidgwick & Jackson, 30/-*).

For a dramatist so impersonal—as dramatists must be—Lennox Robinson is otherwise a very idiosyncratic writer; and it may be that many readers will prefer to return to his theatrical reminiscences in *Curtain Up*, where he is "quite himself", as it were, than to the more constrained pages of this official history, as well as finding in the former book a more living insight into the development of our national theatre in its earlier days.

About the Abbey's later days, from the founding of the State

subsidy to our own time, Dr. Robinson has noticeably little to say in this volume—though full justice is given to the acting of F. J. McCormick. Whatever his view, one might have expected him to be more discursive. That he is not without his hopes for the Abbey, however, is shown in his "Conclusion": "Twelve years later [from its première] *The Plough and the Stars* production was objected to; not on the ground of its subject, the criticism was of its production. Two young literary men suddenly appeared and addressed the audience, complaining that the acting and production were unworthy of such a masterpiece. Having made their protest they quietly withdrew. Whether their protest was justified or not I do not know, for I was five thousand miles away, but I rejoiced in their protest for it showed the vitality of our Theatre, that it was still held to be one of the precious things in Irish life, something to be loved, hated, guarded."

Apart, however, from the scanty attention bestowed on the latter-day Abbey, Dr. Robinson's book is fair and thorough. Nobody who has been connected in any way with the story of the Theatre has been overlooked. And his statement of facts would appear to be impeccable—a matter certainly of the first importance in a chronicle of this kind. An official history it is after all, and to have wished for a different sort of book, more expressive of the writer's outlook, and therefore more lively, would no doubt be wishing for something "not quite the thing."

The book, which is impressively brought out, contains the dates and complete casts of all first productions, including those at the Experimental Theatre, The Abbey Ballet School as well as of plays in Gaelic. There are some thirty illustrations—mainly reproductions of portraits and photographs of authors, actors and others connected with the history of the Theatre.

T.S.

TERESA OF AVILA, BY KATE O'BRIEN. (*Parrish*, 7/6).

Many people who, seeing the title of this book, would turn from it saying, 'I do not want religious stuff', may hesitate seeing too that it has been written by the author of *Without My Cloak*, may take it up, even dip into it,—and if so will surely continue reading; for it is a book of absorbing interest. To some of us no statement concerning Teresa of Avila can be made, no incident of her life can be mentioned without rousing attention, no matter how bald the statement, how indifferently recounted the incident. But here we have the best—the mingling of two personalities—Kate O'Brien resolutely preserving detachment, though plainly in love with her subject: the result is exciting.

Of course one wants to quarrel with the author—'I do not agree with you there' and 'here I think you misconstrue her words' and 'why didn't you tell us more about this?' and 'why omit that painful, illuminating episode?' But our questions are already silenced by the introduction: "Let no reader suppose that in the

few pages here set before him he will find either the life or, miraculously trapped, the spirit of Teresa of Avila . . . The present attempt is a portrait, or rather it is notes for a portrait'. The marvel is that in so short a space we have been given a picture so embracing—no phase of her life but is included. And her spirit, for at least one person, illumines all.

"Assuredly," writes Kate O'Brien, "she had her humour, her irony, her common sense, and her deep natural affections. She loved all the members of her own family with an exasperated fidelity which finds free expression in her letters and which must appeal to any member of any family. Her brothers, her sisters-in-law, her nieces—as we read her we grow concerned for them all." Those letters—how the author comes back and back again to them!—"More delicious letters have never been written—and the gay, vigorous, impatient, scampering and yet so saintly records of *The Foundations* are, if they were nothing else, a vibrant and non-stop entertainment." Once more—"Let those who will not have mysticism, for their own good or uncertain or bad reasons, be generous enough to a great fame, or even merely curious enough about it, to read these works I speak of." (*The Foundations and the Letters*).

But, being a portrait of Teresa, the book ends, most fittingly with the saint's own account of a soul's mystical experiences—"Whence He comes and how she cannot tell, but so it is . . ."

If you will not read St. Teresa, at least read Kate O'Brien. This book repays.

TERESA DEEVY.

JAMES JOYCE'S "ULYSSES" BY STUART GILBERT. (*Faber, 30/-*).

A great deal of literary beer, both large and small, has been drunk to the toast of *Ulysses* since this book first appeared twenty years ago. In those days the full text was only available to those who could visit Shakespeare and Co. in Paris, or borrow it from a friend; but such was the discussion arising from its style and content that people were particularly glad to have Stuart Gilbert's able summary and detailed analysis of the eighteen episodes. There are very few writers or readers nowadays who have not been influenced, even indirectly, by that Irish-European odyssey.

In re-editing and extending his work Stuart Gilbert has fortunately decided to retain the original groundwork but the whole has, I believe, gained both in depth and width of understanding as his own interpretations and those of other critics have matured. It was most valuable that the work should have first been undertaken with Joyce, as it were, looking over his shoulder. Although Gilbert is referring to Joyce's assistance with the French translation undertaken by MM. August Morel and Valéry Larbaud, this passage might well apply to the later study of *Ulysses*:

Joyce showed extraordinary patience in bearing with my interrogation which, as I had just returned to Europe after a longish judicial career in the East, must have had much of the tedious persistence so necessary in legal enquiries east of Suez if one is to get reasonably near that coy nymph Aletheia.

An additional chapter on *The Climate of Ulysses* might well have been longer for it raises many interesting points. Stuart Gilbert mentions that the atmosphere of Dublin in Joyce's youth had much in common with that of one of the larger residential towns in the South of England, where he spent much of his own boyhood. A great deal of unobtrusive learning lies behind this interpretation of *Ulysses*, which also has its moments of quiet humour and individual observation. Thus one is drawn into a page by page re-reading of a study which will surely remain in use when many others will seem like would-be-clever repetitions of each other.

PATRICIA HUTCHINS.

POETRY AND DRAMA, By T. S. ELIOT (*Faber*, 7/6)

Mr. Eliot comes straight to his point in this statement of his views on poetry and drama—perhaps one should say poetry *in* drama. Starting with the assumption that “if poetry is merely a decoration, an added embellishment, if it merely gives people of literary tastes the pleasure of listening to poetry at the same time that they are witnessing a play, then it is superfluous,” he declares. “It must justify itself dramatically, and not merely be fine poetry shaped into a dramatic form. From this it follows that no play should be written in verse for which prose is *dramatically* adequate. And from this it follows, again, that the audience, its attention held by the dramatic action, its emotions stirred by the situation between the characters, should be too intent upon the play to be wholly conscious of the medium.”

The first scene in *Hamlet* is considered at some length as an example of such properly functional dramatic poetry, and from that the writer goes on to a frank examination of what, on this standard, he sees as the errors in his plays, as, for examples, an over-dependence on the chorus in *Murder in the Cathedral* and the device of a lyrical duet in *The Family Reunion*.

Mr. Eliot is exceedingly unwilling to acknowledge any poetry in drama not arising from poetic speech in the entirely technical sense. “There are great prose dramatists—such as Ibsen and Chekhov—who have at times done things of which I would not otherwise have considered prose to be capable, but who seem to me, in spite of their success, to have been hampered in expression by writing in prose.” What a to-do, after all! Is it advisable to overlook so lightly the poetry of *situation*—the magic of tone and temper? Are *The Taming of the Shrew* or *The Cocktail Party*

Bryan MacMahon

CHILDREN OF THE RAINBOW

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T.S.

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'An inexorable chain of events', thinks Mr. Freeman, 'made a writer of him'. His Goldsmith is a lost lamb, straying bewildered through the University, through the Continent, into London. He might have been an Irish Burns but for the poetic conventions which stifled and encumbered him. He might have been a happy peasant in Leinster or Tuscany had not Johnson taken him in hand and bound him to an uncongenial life.

Mr. Freeman is interested in character, and deals sympathetically, for instance, with Goldsmith's relations with Boswell and the Club. The life and literature of the time he views with a certain impatience. (Pope, he observes in passing, was "an acknowledged past-master in machine-made versification") and he has little to say of Goldsmith as an artist. His potted biographies give the impression that he has imperfectly assimilated his knowledge of the period, and in its general effect the book is disjointed and impulsive.

A number of slips have crept in, of which it will be sufficient to mention a few. Lovat was executed not a year before Goldsmith's birth, but seventeen years after it. Purdon twice appears as Purdom, and the index-reference to him is incorrect. "I am not in positive want" becomes "I am now in positive want". Johnson's "Tetty" looks very strange as "Jetty". The "rude Carinthian boor" of *The Traveller* becomes "Corinthian" and his country "Corinthia", and instead of shutting the door against the houseless stranger, which is surely the usual reading, he here shuts *his* door against the *homeless* stranger.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

JAMES B. CONNOLLY: Born 1868.. His parents emigrated to Boston from the Aran Islands. Complete list of publications is as follows: *Jeb Hutton* (1902), *Out of Gloucester* (1902), *The Seiners* (1904), *The Deep Sea's Toll* (1905), *On Tybee Knoll* (1905), *The Crested Seas* (1907), *An Olympic Victor* (1908), *Open Water* (1910), *Wide Courses* (1912), *Sonnie-Boy's People* (1913), *The Trawler* (1914), *Head Winds* (1916), *Running Free* (1917), *The U-Boat Hunters* (1918), *Hiker Joy* (1920), *Tide Rips* (1922), *Steel Decks* (1925), *Coaster Captain* (1927), *The Book of the Gloucester Fishermen* (1927), (Revised and enlarged, 1930), *Gloucestermen* (1930), *Navy Men* (1939), *American Fishermen* by Albert C. Church (Text by Connolly, 1940), *The Port of Gloucester* (1940), *Canton Captain* (1942), *Master Mariner* (1943), *Sea-Borne* (1944).

ROBERT BRENNAN: Was Irish Ambassador in Washington during the War years after which he was appointed Director of Radio Eireann. Since his recent retirement he has published an autobiography, *Allegiance*, and a thriller, *The Man Who Walked Like A Dancer*, which is to be filmed shortly.

PATRICK O'BRIAN: Born 1914 and had already produced four books before the War. Worked in Oxford, Paris, and Italy on a book on Bestiaries. Drove an ambulance in London during the blitz and later joined the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office. He and his wife live on the Mediterranean coast of France.

PATRICK GALVIN: Born Cork, 1925. Served with the R.A.F. His earliest poetry was published in *Poetry Ireland* and *Irish Writing* and since then his poems have appeared widely in Britain. The story in this issue is his first prose publication.

FREDERICK ASHE: Born Dublin, 1913. Writer of humorous essays under pen-name Francis Shean. Is a Leinster inter-provincial Lawn-tennis player and a former Munster hardcourt singles champion. At present lives in Cork and is working on a novel.

FRANCIS RUSSELL: An Irish-American who has contributed to many British reviews. His article, *Joyce and Alexandria*, published in *Irish Writing* No. 17 drew a great deal of attention.

IRISH WRITING

SEAN O'MEARA: Born Dublin, 1933. At present working for Leaving Certificate school examination. Is interested in music. Has not been previously published.

IRVING D. SUSS: A young American writer, lecturer at Rutgers University, who travelled to Ireland in 1949 collecting material and studying Abbey Theatre manuscripts for a book on modern Irish drama.

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